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THE *Auborn (A. d.)*

FRENCH CONVERT.

Being a true Relation of the happy Conversion of a Noble French LADY, from the Errors and Superstitions of Popery, to the Reformed Religion, by Means of a Protestant Gardener her Servant.

Wherein is shewed,

Her great and unparallelled sufferings on the Account of her said Conversion; as also her wonderful deliverance from two Assassins hired by a Popish Priest to murder her; And of her miraculous Preservation in a Wood for two Years; and how she was at last providentially found by her Husband, who (together with her Parents) was brought over to the embracing of the true Religion, as were divers others also.

To which is added,

Some considerations against P O P E R Y.

G L A S G O W.

Printed for ROBERT SMITH, and sold at his Shop, at the sign of the Gilt-Bible, near the head of the Salt-mercat. 1762.

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THE
C O P Y
O F A
L E T T E R

Sent from a French Protestant Minister in
FRANCE, to his Friend in LONDON,
with the following Relation.

My very good Friend,

HAVING received yours the 12th
of April, N. S. I was not a little
over-joy'd, even in my sufferings, to hear
you are well settled in a country, where
you have the freedom of enjoying the ex-
ercise of the true religion, which is a thing
to be valued above all other earthly blef-
sings; and not only that I am much more
gladdened to find you inform me, that the
climate so well agrees with you and your
family, that you have been healthful ever
A 3 since:

“ since you departed from me ; and the rest
 “ of your dear friends here, though many of
 “ us, and particularly myself, labour under
 “ many sufferings and afflictions; I having
 “ (with many others) languished a long time
 “ in prison, for the sake of a good conscience,
 “ afflicted with much sickness, by reason of
 “ my close confinement, which blessed be the
 “ name of God enabling me, I have born with
 “ patience ; though many have died unpitied
 “ of their cruel persecutors, yet the cry of
 “ innocent blood may in time make them
 “ cry, *How hard is it to kick against the*
 “ *pricks* ; yet my prayers are, that instead of
 “ sending any fearful judgment on these pe-
 “ *pish adversaries*, God would turn their
 “ hearts, enlighten their understandings, make
 “ them see the error of their ways, and repent
 “ of the many evils they have done to the
 “ poor protestants, without any manner of
 “ cause or provocation, to whom their rage
 “ and malice extend even beyond death ; for
 “ they still continue their old way of denying
 “ them Christian burial. But this is all our
 “ comfort, *It matters not where our bodies*
 “ *lie, so be it our souls are infolded in Christ's*
 “ *arms*. Yet among the miseries and threats
 “ of death, which I have undergone in taking
 “ care of the spiritual welfare of those that
 “ God has committed to my charge, I cannot
 “ but be greatly comforted when you tell
 “ me, the French protestant church in Eng-
 “ land flourishes ; and that the members of
 “ it, walk worthy of their calling, gaining

“ by

by their inoffensive way of living, a good
 repute among strangers; when in their na-
 tive country so much inhumanity appears
 toward those of the reformed profession;
 for the persecution in many places rages still
 by their impoverishing of thousands of fa-
 milies. But not to be tedious to you, hav-
 ing nothing left to send you but my good
 wishes and prayers, except the inclosed ac-
 count of a very strange but blessed altera-
 tion in the family of the Count ALANSON,
 a worthy Nobleman, well known to you;
 I have drawn it up upon the strictest en-
 quiry into the truth of all the material cir-
 cumstances, as well as my sufferings, and
 spare time from the care of those under my
 charge would permit; and send it to you
 as a token of my love, for the many kind-
 nesses I have received at your hands; that
 so you might communicate it to others, and
 make it public if you see occasion; that all
 may be made sensible of the wonderful
 goodness of Almighty God, and praise him
 for the works he doth unto the children of
 men. For the certainty of what I have
 written, though I have been obliged for me-
 thod's sake to use a few expressions of my
 own, you may firmly rely on my integri-
 ty, who am always a well-wisher to the
 health of your soul and body.

A. D'AVANSON

[illegible]



THE
F R E N C H
C O N V E R T.

IN writing of the following relation, wherein injured innocence and oppressed virtue does so eminently triumph over all the rage and malice, both of men and devils, I shall not study to adorn my stile with flow-
ers of rhetoric, but lead the reader by the clue of truth, into the adorable mysteries of *divine providence*, which are here displayed in such a series of wonders, as can scarce be paralleled. As an introduction to which, I will a little consider how the divine goodness delights to bring light out of darkness, and makes even the wicked confound themselves in their own devices, that out of their evil designs he may bring good to pass. For as Joseph's being sold into Egypt, and there falsely accused of adultery, advanced him next to a throne, and turned to the shame of his accusing mistress and treacherous brethren; though at the beginning, God meant it for good, that he might be instrumental to preserve his father and his household

household alive, and turned the malice of the Patriarchs into a blessing: so the the miseries and extraordinary sufferings of the noble Lady whose story I am going to recite, was made use of by divine providence, as a means of the conversion of her husband, parents and many others, to the true religion; which as she hath often said since, has been a very ample and glorious recompence. But I shall not anticipate what with more satisfaction you will find in the relation itself, which take as follows.

In Britany, one of the fairest provinces of France, there lately lived Alanfon, a person of noble extraction, and of an estate suitable to the greatness of his birth, and those noble qualities that enrich his mind, Who being a lover of military actions, was easily persuaded to serve the king in the wars, where having an eminent command given him, he behaved himself with such bravery as gained him the admiration of his enemies, the love of his friends, and fresh honours of his king, who took particular notice of his great performances. But in the intervals of two or three campaigns, he cast his eyes upon one Deidamia, a young lady of a quality not inferior to himself in birth, whose beauty and virtue were equally attractive: to her he made his addresses, and the equality of their birth, and the suitableness of their dispositions, made his conquest the more easy: so that in a little time they were contracted and married, to their mutual joy and satisfaction.

This

This happy couple having for a whole winter enjoyed the blessing of each others mutual love and endearing affections, without the least umbrage of any interpoling cloud that might give an alloy to their happiness; at length the spring came on, and the armies gathering together, summoned Alanson from the repose he took in the soft embraces of his chaste and loving wife, to the field of war, to act his part again upon that stage of honour, where he had already acquired so much reputation. But he never seemed so unwilling to court fame abroad as now, since he must of necessity leave behind him the dearest part of himself; he had many strugglings and combats in his mind, which seemed to be divided between love and honour; he was loath to leave his lady, and yet unwilling to have his reputation sullied: and these different passions in the mind, caused such an alteration in his countenance, that it was taken notice of by his lady, who not knowing the cause, was the more troubled at it; and therefore following him one day into the garden, (whither he had retired to consider with himself what he had best to do) she earnestly pressing him to let her know what it was that troubled him; for she had for some time (she said) observed he was disquieted, but could not tell at what; and she was fearful she might some way, (though she knew it not) be the occasion of it; adding, *Command me in any thing a wife can justly do, and I am all obedience.* This tender carriage of his lady added fresh fuel to the fire of his afflictions.

afflictions, and made him still far more unwilling to leave her. Wherefore causing her to sit down by him, he told her, She was indeed the innocent occasion of his trouble, for her great love and tenderness to him, had so engaged his heart to her in a reciprocal affection, that he knew not how to think of leaving her, though honour loudly called him to the field. His lady, when he talked of leaving her, was hardly kept from swooning in his arms, and could not forbear saying, *What! must we part then? Ah wretched Deidamia!* and straightway she fell a weeping: her tears did so prevail upon the Count, that love had now obtained an entire victory; and he resolved to stay at home with Deidamia; and therefore intreated her to dry up her tears, and be comforted; for he had now come to a resolution, rather to undergo some hard censures for staying at home, than by his going to the camp to leave his dear Deidamia disconsolate—These kind assurances of her husband, gave her that satisfaction which soon shewed itself in a cheerful countenance. And the endearing expressions she gave the Count on that occasion, made him conclude they were both happy in each others love.

But behold the inconstancy of worldly happiness, and how little we can promise ourselves of it here! we may indeed both purpose and resolve; but we cannot secure ourselves from disappointment: the footsteps of divine providence are often hard to trace. Hence it is that we are told by the inspired penman, *That the*

the ways of God are in the deep, and his paths in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known. And we see often, whatever pleasing prospect of felicity we have in view, one unforeseen occasion, or sudden turn of providence, destroys it, and in a moment deprives us of that happiness which we had promised to ourselves for many years: and yet these changes, to those that fear the Lord, are so disposed and ordered by God's providence, that in the end they evidently work together for their good.—And thus it fell out in the instance before us: for whilst Alanfon and his Deidamia delighted in each other, and were both happy in their conjugal affection, an accident fell out, that put him under a necessity of going to the camp, which was, That a colonel's place in the regiment of Picardy being vacant, a relation of Alanfon's at court, out of a too officious kindness, put the king in mind of the good services of Alanfon, and desired his majesty to bestow that vacancy upon him: to which his majesty (being sensible of his former bravery and good service) readily consented, and ordered his commission to be sent too him, which was done accordingly. When Alanfon received this commission from the pursevant who brought it, he gave him a generous reward for his pains; but was not very well pleased, neither with the new honour his majesty had given him, nor with his kinsman's too officious kindness in procuring it; because it put him under a necessity of parting from his lady, which gave him a very sensible

displeasure: but knowing that by his commission he was engaged too far for a retreat, his care was now to make his Deidamia as easy as he could; and therefore calling her to take a turn with him in the garden, and leading her into an arbour covered with jessamine, he thus began to tell her the unwelcome news that had been brought him. *My dearest Deidamia, let me conjure you not to be troubled at what I am going now to tell you, but if you will oblige me, do it by shewing your resolution and fortitude of mind; and yet I cannot but own, that our resolves like little heaps of sand, are quickly brought to nothing; but the decrees of heaven, like the foundations of the earth, are fixed for ever.* 'Twas in this very arbour, my dearest Deidamia, that I resolved to stay at home with thee, and not return to the campaign in Flanders; and I appeal to him who knows my heart, how firmly I intended; but see here, how I am forced against my will to break my resolution; (and with that he shewed her the commission the king had sent him to be colonel of the regiment of Picardy) and now you see, my Deidamia, the necessity that lies upon me to leave you for a time, but tho' our bodies be divided we will have yet but one soul, and love whilst providence denies us to live together. And whilst I in the field am fighting for my country, you shall stay here, and pray for my success: And if it pleases God that I return, (which I do not doubt at all, for heaven I am sure will hear your fervent prayers) it will be a new addition to my joy, to lay those laurels I shall win in bat-

He, at Deidamia's feet. Poor Deidamia heard this heavy news with a sad heart, but answered with a piety and prudence worthy of herself, that since what happened was not of his seeking, but what the providence of God had called him to, she thought it was her duty, tho' she could hardly do it without reluctance, to acquiesce in the divine disposal of human actions, and would endeavour to stifle her resentments, rather than give them any farther trouble: Alanson being no less pleased with Deidamia's prudence than her kind affection, which he expressed by several tender things he told her, applied himself to the getting ready of his equipage, in order to his departure; and the settling the affairs of his family; ordering Antonio his chaplain, who was a friar of the order of St. Francis, to say a solemn mass for his success in the field, and the protection of his lady and family in his absence; recommending his dearest Deidamia to the care of Antonio his chaplain, and Fronovius the steward of his household, in these words: *To your care, in my absence, I recommend the safety and welfare of my beloved lady the most virtuous and loving of wives; and charge you as you expect to answer it to God and me, be obedient to all her commands; comfort and cherish her in her solitude, and see that all my domesticks pay the like exact respects.* This and much more, they faithfully promised to observe. Then giving liberally to each servant, and having notice that his equipage was ready, and divers gentlemen on horse-back waited to accompa-

ny him, he took his solemn leave of his dear Deidamia, whose sad presaging heart was overcome with grief to that degree, that she could only speak these few prophetick words, *Ah! my dear lord! may heaven prevent my fears! but my poor heart forebodes that this will be a long and fatal parting.* To which the count replied, Do not cast down thyself, dear Deidamia, by the indulging of such melancholy fancies; but assure yourself I'll hasten my return as much as possible, and I will send to you as often as I can. And in the mean time shall commit you to the protection of the almighty, the blessed virgin mother, and all the holy saints and angels; and sealing his affection on her lips with gentle kisses, he took his leave of her, and rode away; not thinking he had left an innocent dove to the protection of two ravenous vultures.

It is not much to my purpose to tell you, how well he was received at the head of his command by the duke of Luxemburg, or what brave exploits his courage carried him through, since neither fame, nor the public news from Paris have been wanting to speak his commendation: I therefore omit it, (unless in some passages, where it will, in the thread of this amazing relation, be necessary to mention some particulars) and shall continue with the sorrowful Deidamia, who after his departure, seemed to have banished all comfort from her breast, all that she found was in her devotions and prayers to almighty God, for his protection and safe return, greatly affecting solitude;

and

and as much as she could, avoided the visits of divers ladies, who (as they say) came to make her merry, and divert her melancholy, she being very well beloved, both by the nobility and gentry for her comely carriage, modest behaviour, sweetness of temper, and affability.

In the cool of the day she usually made it her business to retire into her garden pensive and alone; it being by the care and diligence of the gardener, kept and ordered like another paradise, store with great variety of choice plants and flowers adorned with pleasant fountains, and several delightful arbours shaded over with inter-twining jessamine, in one of which she and her absent lord had passed some joyful, as well as sad hours, and at the remembrance of them would sadly weep, then pray, (according to the custom of the Papists, who allow praying to saints) to the tutelary saints for his protection: and so drying up her tears, would walk thence again, taking but little rest in any place; but one time passing by a bed of tulips, she espied Bernard her gardener (for so he was called) busy in watering them, and erecting such as declined their drooping heads, occasioned by the heat of the sun's too scorching beams; she had often in this man observed a harmless native innocence, accompanied with acute ingenuity, (and indeed a gardener, who understands his business as he ought to do, must be an ingenious man) and therefore imagined it might administer to her some advantage to hold discourse with him, in what related to the mysteries of gardening, thinking

it no undervaluing, tho' he was her menial servant, since she had often read, That kings, princes and other great and wise men, had voluntarily become of this occupation: that Adam, when governor of all the world, was employed in it by God himself; so that coming close to him, whilst his hands were busied at his work; the man by his ear, (his back being toward her) being informed of some body's approach, suddenly started up, and seeing his beautiful lady near him, was a little surpriz'd and would have retired to give her the more freedom in her walks; but she prevented him by saying, Bernard, Pray do not let me hinder you in your business; I come on purpose to observe your dexterity in gardening. I see you mind it with a just diligence, though your lord is absent. Madam, replied he, I beg your ladyship's pardon, in that I tell you, I am no eye-servant, as well knowing I must give an account to God as well as to man, if I am negligent in what I perform, and am intrusted with. Deidamia stood surpris'd at the man's plain but ingenuous reply: and changing some what the manner of her discourse, asked him divers questions about the virtues, natures, qualities and production of flowers and plants, &c. in all which he satisfied her to her admiration; by which she perceived him better learned in the mysteries of nature, than she expected from one of his profession. And to be brief she often held such innocent conversation with him, when at any time she found him busy in the garden, being much delighted to hear him discourse,

course, how much of the wisdom and goodness of God might be learned from the works of creation; for he had a peculiar faculty of spiritualizing his employment, and making his business serve like *Jacob's ladder*, to carry him from earth to heaven. Which sometimes caused her to reflect, that this man was something more than he appeared to be, (in which indeed she was not much mistaken) so that entertaining a good opinion of him, she ordered his lodging to be changed for a better; and his course and homely commons to be enlarged, above what was usual to those of his profession and degree.

But now Antonio the chaplain, however he had appeared like a saint to his master, began to shew himself a devil to his mistress, and too plainly shewed his cloven foot; for tho' above fifty years of age, he had for some time harboured lustful desires towards the fair and beauteous *Deidamia*, and he was now resolved to attempt her chastity. And tho' her virtue and spotless chastity might very well have kept him from pursuing his unclean desires, yet he flattered himself with hopes of obtaining his end, by corrupting her judgment: In which he found himself very much mistaken, as the sequel will declare. For the divine goodness had a farther work to do for *Deidamia*; who being altogether ignorant of what this wretch designed against her honour, frequented her beloved garden as she used to do; and one evening bearing the gardener reading in a lonely arbour, where he thought himself

secure

secure (for he had industriously concealed his being a protestant from any of the family) her curiosity to hear him, made her draw nigh so softly that he could not hear her: he was then reading the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, from the 20th to the end of the 23d verse, viz. *for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations: and their foolish hearts were darkened: professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things.*

Having thus far proceeded he paused, and with eyes lifted up to heaven, gave glory unto God, that he had preserved him blameless from these offences against his divine majesty, which through ignorance and superstition had overspread the greatest part of Europe: "O Lord, (continued he) I humbly beseech thee, as I have already suffered persecution for thy Name's sake, and for the sake of a good conscience: so never let me depart from the ways of thy truth, to change thy incorruptible glory into an image made like corruptible man:" and when he had said this, tears stood in his eyes, and his words were succeeded by sighs.

Deidamia,

Deidamia, who had all this while attentively listened, found something in her mind, that made a sudden uneasy alteration, and thought to have gone away undiscovered; but then again, her zeal for the Romish religion, which she thought he had reproached, by detesting image worship, carried her so far as she resolved to give him a sharp reprimand, lest he persisting further, until discovered by others might ruin himself; tho' her goodness and gentle nature was not for working him any injury by revealing it. But never was man more surprized than Bernard when he saw her, whom at that time of day he little suspected, as not being usual; yet collecting his scattered senses he arose from his seat, and withal endeavoured to hide his bible under his coat, thinking she had been newly come, and might neither have heard him read, nor seen his bible, but she in a frowning manner, contrary to the wonted sweetness of her temper, commanded him to deliver it to her, that the flames might conceal his faults; and told him she would not for that time, discover his being conversant with a book so strictly by the church prohibited to the laity; for, continued she, it is enough that we believe as the church believes, without farther dispute, or puzzling ourselves with those scruples and niceties, which in all probability we may make a false construction of, and wrest even those scriptures that are the rule of our faith, to our own damnation.

This smart discourse, and the frowns in the fair Deidamia's countenance, did not in this case

case so much daunt Bernard, as in another of
 less concern it might have done; but with some
 assurance, he replied, *Ah, madam! I little*
thought of being surprized by you at my devo-
tions; but since I am, I cannot grant what you
demand; rather you may command my body to
the flames, and as a willing martyr I will
sooner go than betray the cause of God, in de-
livering up his holy word to be consumed, in
which is contained all things necessary to salva-
tion: and it would be in me an apparent con-
tempt of that salvation, should I voluntarily,
or through fear cast it from me. As to your
saying, madam, That the church has prohibited
the laity the use of this sacred book, especially
in a known tongue, I readily grant it; but, O
most virtuous lady, you little know their poli-
cy in that; it is not that they fear or care what
misconstructions men make of it; because it is
like arrows in the hand of a giant strong a-
gainst their worldly interest, plainly discover-
ing their errors, gross idolatries.—He would
have proceeded but the heat of zeal prompted
her hastily to interrupt him, laying, fiercely
Bernard, you are distracted, or else what is
worse, a heretic: I took you to be wiser and
more reasonable, when I discoursed with you
the other day. Truly, madam replied he, As
for my being in my right senses, I bless almighty
God, he has in his mercy hitherto continued
them to me; and for my being a heretic, par-
don me, if St. Paul answers for me, when he
was accused before Felix, saying, But this I
confess unto thee, after the way which they

call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers: believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets. Upon this, Deidamia, who by nature was all goodness, gentleness, and affableness, began to moderate her anger, and to consider a little what he had said; yet her zeal for the religion she professed, made her mildly rebuke him, and lay before him the danger he was in, if his opinion was discovered; bidding him be cautious and wise in what he did; though, for her part, he need not fear but she would lock up what she had discovered, in her breast, and it should pass no farther, and so departing left him in some confusion.

Deidamia retiring to her chamber, began to consider what had passed, and remembered she had often wept in her tender years, when she heard the cruelties the Roman Catholics used towards the Huguenots or Protestants in France; and disapproving of their persecuting spirit, as not of God; whose chiefest attribute is mercy, tender compassion, and forgiveness; though on the contrary, she found those who made religion so much their boast, so very cruel, that far from the instance of our Saviour's refusing to call for fire from heaven to consume those that had injuriously and despitefully used him, they made their very worship and devotions a snare, to bring those under their cruel handlings, who had no wise offended them, but in being separate from them, and moving according to the dictates of their conscience. She had likewise observed the harmlessness and

in-

inoffensive manner of living in the persecuted, and often shewed some dislike of the looseness and unchristian practices of the persecutors; so that altho' she had a good opinion of the Romish religion, as having been brought up in it from her infancy, yet had she not so of many of the professors of it, who apparently derogated from the ways of virtue, and seemed to encourage vice.

This wrought some labourings in her mind through the gracious operation of the holy Spirit; and in her night-thoughts more seriously reflecting on many things, and particularly on the gardener's expression out of St. Paul's words to Felix the governor, inferring from thence, that it must be the sincerity of the heart towards God, more than the shew or outward name, or profession of any religion, that renders the person acceptable in his sight. In the midst of these cogitations and debates within herself, she found something (as 'twere by an over ruling power) strongly move her to a desire of further conversing with Bernard, about the fundamentals of his religion; which by the Popish priests, as well in their pulpits, as private conversation, had been represented so odious, damnable and to be detested.

The morning no sooner summon'd the gardener to visit his flowers and plants, and perform his usual task in watering and ordering them; but Deidamia, who had taken little rest that night, arose; and having performed her oraison, and then refreshing herself with a moderate refecton, took an opportunity be-

between that and dinner-time to enter the garden privately, at a door that opened into it from her apartment; and to screen the better what she intended from prying eyes, took divers turns in gathering posies of flowers, and then fanning herself as if the heat offended her, passing many winding alleys, overspread with pleasant shades, she came to the above-mentioned arbour, and again surprized the gardener in his meditations: the man was not under any consternation at her coming but rising and bowing low, would have departed out of good manners, to give her the sole freedom of that pleasant bower; but she laid her commands on him to stay, saying, She had considered of his former discourse, and had made it her business to find him out, that he might give her some better reason for the opinion he held, than yet he had done.

His modesty, and the humble thoughts he conceived of himself, would scarce give him leave to sit down, though she often commanded him so to do; but at last he comply'd, and then she asked him, *Upon what ground and foundation the basis of his religion was fixed.*

Card. It is founded on the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which were written by men inspired by the holy Ghost, and given for our instruction and learning; it is only the word of God that can warrant the truth of any profession in religious matters; and that we Protestants (through God's assistance) labour to conform and live up to.

Deid. *Ay, but you may be mistaken in the*

misinterpreting the scriptures, and fall into gross heresies, as our church charges you; and therefore has strictly forbid the laity of our communion to meddle with them, lest, like weapons put into the hands of idiot, or madmen, they injure themselves and others thereby.

Gard. Ah! lady, shall I be free, and deal plainly with you in this point?

Deid. *With all my heart, let me hear what you can say in answer to it?*

Gard. All scriptures are given for our learning, God is willing we should know his revealed will, that we may be the better enabled to perform it. St. Paul commends the Bereans, and calls them *noble*, because they searched the scriptures, to see whether the things they heard were so, or no; and we have many commands for this; as, *Seek ye the book of the Lord and read*, Isaiah xxxiv. 6. *They were more noble, in that they searched the scriptures daily*, Acts xvii. 11. *Let the word of God dwell richly in you*, Col. iii. 16. *From a child thou hast known the scriptures*, 2 Tim iii. 15. *Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, Eph. vi. 17. and many others that I might mention, which are to be found in the scriptures; and this not commanded to some, but to all that seek salvation.

Deid. *Certainly if our church had seen this fit, they would not have denied it: but being dangerous to souls, it ought to be restrained.*

Gard. It is indeed dangerous to break God's commandments, and to teach men so to do, and to make the word of God of none effect
by

by human tradition. We know the woes Christ pronounced against the Pharisees for these things.

Deid. *Why, who are guilty of this? The church of Rome, the holy catholic church, as it hath in many ages been stiled, is surely unspotted of such crimes.*

Gard. I wish I could say it was not, but it is deeply guilty, as in many other particulars, so most eminently in this. That it professes no man is obliged to receive the scriptures as the word of God, or to believe any of it, but from the testimony of your church; and to awe men to such a belief, threats of damnation are used as well as the magistrate's sword, and cruel torments by inquisitions; and, indeed, it is not done without ground: this is done to hinder prying into their gross idolatries, errors, and superstition, derogatory to the scriptures, and express command of God.

Deid. *Sure you're besides yourself: nor can you prove this; but being fallen from the church, do this only in prejudice and spight, to lay a stain upon its virgin innocence.*

Gard. No; it is apparent from the word of God, and even from reason it self, in those that will consider, that are not blinded with ignorance, which your church, in her sense truly styles the mother of devotion.

Deid. *Can any such thing be in a church that is infallible? And to prove that it is so, it is said to be built upon St. Peter; he is the rock spoken of, and this rock doth, together with St. Peter, include his successors, and the church*

built on this rock (as united to, and built upon the pope) is infallible; for it is said, The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Gard. Pardon me, lady, if I say, There is no agreement among the church-men about this infallible judge; some will have it the pope, some a general council, and others both; none of your writers have yet concluded on it. However, these words are perverted; for it is more probable, that not St. Peter's *person*, but his *doctrine* or *confession* concerning Christ, is the *rock* upon which the church is built. Scripture is the best interpreter: it is not Peter, but Christ, is the foundation of the church, as here in my bible you may see, by the 28th chapter and 16th verse of *Isaiah*, compared with 1 *Pet.* ii. 6, 7, 8. which you may please to read. [*which she did.*] It is moreover expressly said, 1 *Cor.* iii. 11. *Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* And this is the more considerable because he speaks against those that made the apostles to be foundations, saying, *I am of Paul, another of Apollas or Cephas;* and if this is spoke of Peter, no more is said of him here, than is spoke of all the prophets and apostles, *Ephes.* ii. 20. *Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.*

Deid. Well, I am not much learned in this mystery; but, pray, what as erroneous can you assign in our worship, or any other thing the church holds, as absolutely necessary?

Gard. The paying divine adoration to angels and saints, expressly contrary to God's

commands, and derogatory to his honour, who alone ought to be worshipped in heaven and earth; and to worship any other, either saint or angel, or any creature is idolatry, and a breach of the second commandment.

Deid. *Nay, not too hasty; we do not worship the angels and saints as God, with the highest worship, which is only proper to God; but with an inferior kind of religious worship that they may present our supplications to him.*

Gard. *There is no intercessor or mediator but Christ Jesus who is appointed to perform that office; If any man want wisdom, let him ask of God. James i. 5. Neither of saints nor angels. Come to me saith our Saviour, and I will in no wise cast you out. This free invitation shews us, he alone was to receive our petitions, and present them to his father. There is also image worship brought in cunningly by priests, to gain worldly advantage; and pretended miracles; to draw the ignorant to pay their devotion more at one place than at another, imposing on the ignorant for lucre sake. I could say much more but I fear to offend you.*

Deid. *No, you do not. But let us come nearer to the main controversy. What think you of transubstantiation? Is not Christ corporally present in the sacrament?*

Gard. *It is a misrepresentation of our Saviour's words; for if he had so meant, as the church of Rome hold it, when he brake the bread, he must have held himself in his own hands, and eat himself, yet still sit whole and*

entire at the table; his whole body must be in the mouth of every communicant at once, and that body in millions of places at one time, broken and unbroken, and be subject to putrefaction; and therefore the words, *This is my body*, doth intend, *This doth signify my body*: and upon the same account our Saviour is called a *door*, a *rock*, a *vine*; yet none can be so void of understanding, to believe he was turned into any of these. And therefore, when he brake the bread, and gave the cup, he did it only, that when Christian congregations were met on solemn occasions to celebrate his worship, they should do it in remembrance of him, till his coming in glory at the last day, as the immediate words explain, and it is absurd to believe, that the priest's uttering a few words over a wafer, can make it a God, or that body offered on the cross.

Deid. You amaze me: but pray, what do you hold about purgatory? Is there such a place, where souls are to endure their purgations after death, that go not immediately to heaven; and by masses and prayers may be released sooner or later.

Gard. It is a tradition lately brought in, and with it hath brought much increase of wealth to the church. The word of God allows only heaven for those who shall be made vessels of mercy; and hell for those whose sins have provoked him to cast them down to those dismal regions of sorrow, and eternal woe: no prayers after death being available.

Deid.

Deid. These notions are as new as strange to me, have you any authentic proof of this?

Card. Yes; the revealed word of God is sacred proof beyond all denial; The rich man in hell lifted up his eyes being in torment. Luke xvi. 23. They shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the other shall be cast into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matth. viii. 11, 12. He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned, Mark. xvi. 16. Here is no such thing as a purgatory to be found; it is only the blood of Christ that purgeth us from our sins, and from all uncleanness of flesh and spirit, to present our souls blameless and unspotted to his father: by this I understand those that die in the Lord need not our prayers, and those that die in their sins no prayers can avail them; for in the grave there is no repentance; as the tree falls, so it must lie, whether it falls towards the north, or towards the south, where it falls there it must lie. There is only two extremes, north and south, no middle way, or purgatory for it to fall in. As death leaves us, so judgment will assuredly find us.

He would have proceeded, but she stopt him, saying, Pray, how long have you been of this opinion?

Card. Ever since God was pleased to enlighten me with his grace, to be attentive to his holy word, and to be guided by it.

Deid.

Deid. Was you ever then of the church of Rome?

Card. In my younger years I was; but through mercy, being made sensible by the scriptures of the corruptions and errors of that church, by the assistance of worthy divines, I hope with St. Paul, nothing shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. I will not offend your ladyship's chaste ears with the history of the debaucheries and wicked lives of divers popes, and most of the clergy; but will pray heaven to defend you from either lust or revenge. And since I have by a free confession put my life in your hands, I humbly submit it to your goodness, to—

Here again she interrupted him, and demanded, *Why the religion he profess'd was called the protestant religion?*

To which he replied, as for being so called, it is to distinguish it from that of the Romish; it came from several princes and cities in Germany, who upon the preaching of good men, and their exemplary lives, protested against the usurpations of the Romish church and its errors. That it was no new doctrine, but the truth of primitive christianity, confessed, asserted and purged from the corruptions of popery, taking the revealed will of God for its guide.

At this *Deidamia* paused a while; and then taking his bible, looked over the sacred proofs he had turned down in order; and her colour went and came so, that he easily perceived her mind

mind was labouring under some difficulties, and so giving it him again, she went away without speaking one word.

This somewhat perplexed the gardener, as fearing she was displeased with what he had said; but her sending for him privately to her chamber the next morning, under the notion of bringing her some choice flowers, banished all fear from him; when they two being only left together, she gently led him into the closet, and shutting the door, to be more private, said, O Bernard (fetching a deep sigh) your yesterday's discourse has much broken my last night's rest; I have been meditating on it, and I find abundance of reason in what you say; you have (as St. Paul said in another case) almost persuaded me to be of your persuasion. I wish to God, most virtuous lady (replied he) I might be an humble instrument in God's hand, to do any thing that may redound to his glory and the good and welfare of your precious and immortal soul, without hazarding your temporal quiet and peace, or exposing you to any danger; tho' for a crown of life and immortality, all earthly things are to be despised; and the holy apostle accounts all this world's good, but as dross and dung, in comparison of enjoying Christ Jesus. Well, (said she) this is my aim, and if God enable me with his assisting grace, I hope, through his mercy to attain it. I have indeed (continued she) to my great grief, observed the loose and profane manner of living of those that profess our religion; alledging, that a confession, with ab-

solus

solution, and some other works, will purge them from their sins, and gain them that blessedness in the end, which I could never heartily believe they would obtain by them: and since I have more seriously considered God's word, expressly to the contrary, I cannot believe that any thing but sincere and unfeigned repentance in the course of an unspotted life can purchase (through the merits of my Saviour) those endless glories and transcendent blessings that God hath promised to poor mortals.——She would have proceeded, but the falling tears stopt her utterance, and Bernard had an inward rejoicing to see her brought to this pass; whereupon he comforted her with good advice, and the cordials of God's mercies and promises. In brief, he had made her sensible of the errors she had been brought up in, and then opened (from point to point) the cheat of pretended miracles, and relics, the imposing on people with pardons and indulgences to get money, the whoredoms, murders, and incests of many popes, cardinals, and prelates of the Romish church; their unreasonableness in prohibiting priests marriage, which is immediately appointed by God, and the allowing them by canons and decrees the embraces of concubines, or to commit adultery, expressly contrary to the command of the almighty, soasmuch as he has expressly said, *Those that do these things shall not inherit eternal life*——He would have proceeded, but hearing the sound of feet coming up stairs, he hastened him down a back-way, with so much

precipitation, that he left his bible behind him, which she luckily seeing, locked up in a scrutoire.

I have told you before, that father Antonio the priest, forgetting his function, duty and distance, gave way to his unruly and lawless passion, and was then blundering up stairs to find her in private, having almost flustered himself with wine on purpose either to be more confident in his wicked design, to tell her the story of his nauseous love, or rather lust; or, that if being reprov'd, he might have some slender excuse for his impertinency, and lay (as too many do) the blame of their folly on that which is rather an aggravation of their crime, *i. e.* their drunkenness; and so surprising, however he came, that putting his nose over the upper step, just as the gardener posted out at the private door, he had a glimpse of the back parts of his garments, as it afterwards appeared; but at that time took no notice of any such thing. Deidamia seeing Antonio coming towards her in a very pleasant humour demanded with a modest decency, what occasion brought him thither to disturb her retirement?

Ah! (said the impudent priest, who could not long keep down his boiling passion) *your two fair eyes, sweet lady, like lead-stones have drawn me to you; that beauteous tempting face of yours has made me forget myself, with my duty to my lord, and the trust he reposed in me.* Why certainly, said Deidamia (calling in patience to bridle her passion) you are beside your

your self Antonio. ——— What mean you by this kind of discourse? *If I am besides myself* (replied he almost crying) *your fair self is the cause of it, whose beauty, like arrows, have wounded my heart, and sickened my brain; I wish I had never seen such amiableness in woman kind; but since I have been so unfortunate as to be your fetter'd captive, take some compassion on me and ease my sufferings.* What sufferings, replied Deidamia, frowning, or what can be the sense of all this loose stuff? *Why then* (replied he) *to be serious in plain terms I love you; and that so passionately, that unless you condescend to make me suitable returns, I shall have no peace nor quiet; but must be miserable and wretched eternally.* Then (said she) be you so: what have you seen of any loose milbecoming behaviour in me, that you should dare to speak thus to me? This, like a thunder bolt, struck him mute; when smoothing her brows, and growing a little calmer, she said, come, come, Antonio, I took you for another man; you profess sanctity, and admonish others to lead a holy life; is this pretension then real, or is it only feigned, to try my virtue? *I protest* said he holding up both his hands, *it is real and I cannot help it.* Why said she, would you commit so great a wickedness if you might, and make your self guilty of a crime so heinous! *Ah! lady* (replied he) *if that be all, I can absolve you by the power given me by the see of Rome. consent, but let me enjoy you, your penance shall be always easy. I'll get a dispensation, for your marriage vow*
from

from the pope, with pardon, indulgences, or any thing, for sins past, and those that are to come: nay, I'll do any thing, so I do not fall under your displeasure: let me alone for the rest, and——

This insolence so much displeased the virtuous lady, that she could hear no more, nor bear it any longer; but commanded him out of her presence; yet could not be rid of him, till she threatened to call up the rest of her servants. Whereupon he went muttering away; and for two days after, as much as possible he could, he shunned coming into her presence; which much pleased her; for she could not behold him but with horror and detestation.

This attempt however, in one sense, (thru' the overruling providence and goodness of God, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, and can make the greatest wickedness of his creatures, serve the purposes of his own glory) worked to her advantage; for she believed now all true which the gardener had told her, about the wicked debauched lives of the Romish clergy, since this villanous papist had not scrupled to proffer the pope's pardon for no less than *adultery*, and that before it was committed, by which means or encouragement, she plainly saw it must consequently be that they frequently tempted easy and ignorant people to the commission of many sins: therefore she resolved to leave these blind guides, and take the word of God for her leader and instructor; forbearing to come

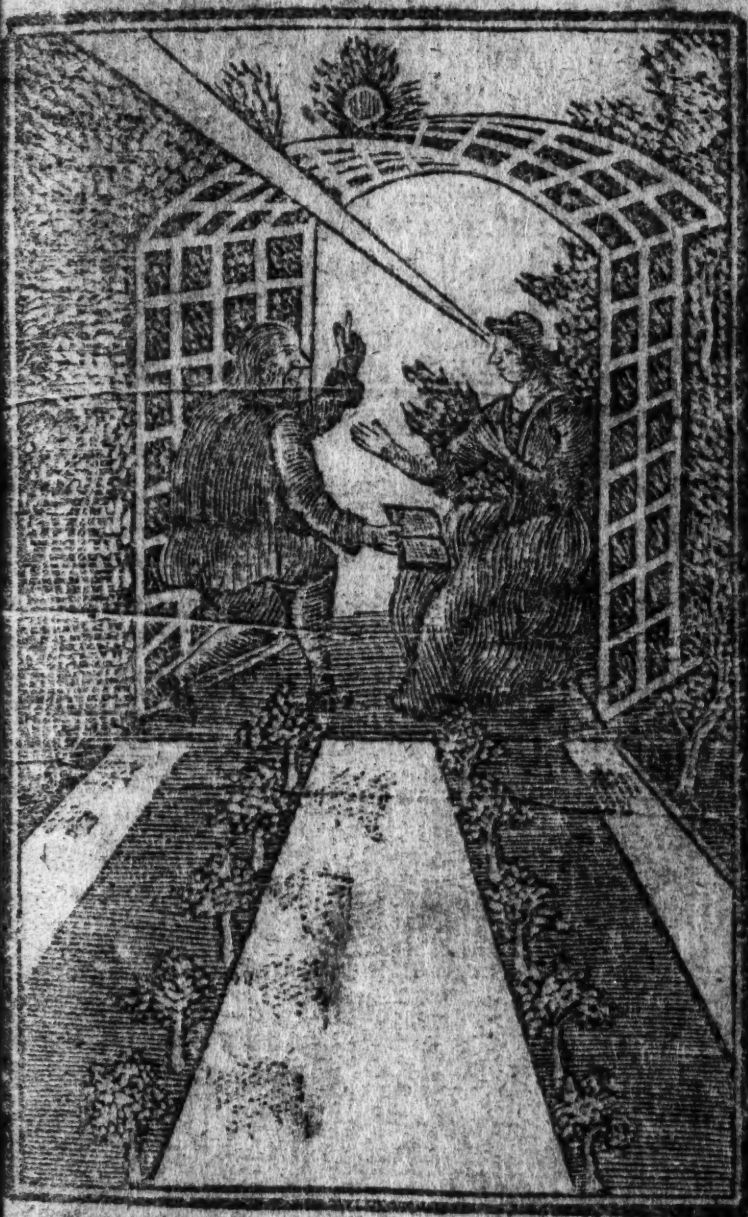
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to confession or hear mass, sometimes upon pretence of indisposition, and at other times purposely going abroad, at the usual times of either; and holding some other conferences with the gardener, which (as to particulars) for brevity's sake I must of necessity pass over.

She found in herself a strange aversion to the religion she had been brought up in; and and having procured a bible in the French tongue, took such delight in reading it, that when ever she had time to retire, it was not out of her hand; yet she kept this as secret as possible, and not being ready at it herself, got the gardener to turn her down such proofs, as were the *strongest arguments against the errors of popery, and where the abominations of the mystical Babylon were pointed at.* This he joyfully did, and gave praise to God who had made him instrumental in so good a work; tho' he was not ignorant his life was liable to pay for it, if it were discovered. She likewise laid aside her beads and crucifix, conversed no more with *rosaries* or the legends of pretended saints; and tho' she found some temptations and fears at the beginning, yet frequently praying to God, she overcame Satan's wiles, and found abundance of joy and comfort enlightening her soul, so that she could not forbear breaking out into raptures of praise and thanksgiving, for the wonderful changes (by so strange and unexpected means) wrought in her soul.

Whilst this virtuous lady and the gardener held their private correspondence, in discour-
ing



ing of the things of God, and encouraging and exhorting each other to perseverance and steadfastness in the truth, Antonio, and Fronovius, equally burning with lustful desire to enjoy the tender beauties of the fair Deidamia, were plotting and contriving how their lawless designs might best be brought about, tho' each plotted by himself (for as yet they were ignorant of each others passion) The villanous priest (as you have already heard) had been repined with indignation by the chaste lady, which inwardly tormented him, and brought him almost to his wits end; but the other (Fronovius) had made no trial of her virtue, and waited a favourable opportunity to do it; and therefore he thinks, meditates, and casts many things in his mind, till at last (his passion emboldening him) he was resolved to break the ice with a letter; and if she took no notice of that; to second it with a personal address: but how he should do this with privacy and safety, he was at a stand for a time; for he feared to trust any body to deliver it, lest his criminal love should take air; and to deliver it himself, would look too dastardly, as if he was not capable, or at least, durst not speak for himself; however, in a little while he met with a fit opportunity; for Deidamia accidentally dropping her handkerchief, as she passed through a large gallery that led to her apartment, he carefully took it up, and folding up his letter in it (which he had ready sealed by him) he gave it to her gentlewoman to give to her lady, telling her he found it in the long

gallery. The gentlewoman knowing the handkerchief to be her lady's, immediately carried it to her, who received it from her, without knowing any thing of a letter being in it: and and afterwards accidentally taking the handkerchief out of her pocket, the letter dropped out upon the ground, which she taking up, and looking upon the superscription, was extremely surpris'd to find it directed to herself; and hastily opening it, was much more so to find the contents thereof as followeth:

Pardon me, most lovely Deidamia, if your beauty makes me forget the station I am in, and emboldens me to own a passion I have laboured in vain to hide. To be brief, dear lady, I am so captivated by your charms and singular perfections, that I am constrained to say, I love you infinitely above all mortal creatures; and since it appears to me unreasonable that any one man should monopolize so inestimable a treasure, give me leave to hope, and don't suffer me to languish and die; but render the balm of your kindness to cure the wounds which your bright eyes have made in

Your otherwise

wretched servant

FRONOVUS.

The reading of this letter filled her with blushes, anger and amazement, at the unparalleled boldness and villany of the author of it, and at first was resolved to commit it to the flames, or to tear it in pieces, but upon second thoughts, she laid it up in her closet, where she vexed and fretted her self, that she was thus left among such ungrateful wretches, that dared so much to suspect her virtues, and measure them by their own wicked and filthy inclinations, as to presume she would defile her marriage-bed; being more grieved for this discovery than the former; for she knew the priest had something of the libertine in him, but this man she had held to be honest and virtuously inclined till now: and to him she thought to have discovered Antonio's folly, if he persisted in it; that by shame and reproofs he might have reclaimed him. But now she scarce knew who to trust; and could not therefore but tremble at the apprehensions of some violence that might be offered her from those lustful miscreants, whose sight now very much displeased her. She thought once or twice of displacing them; but found their authority in the family was so great, that in her lord's absence she could not do it: whereupon she fell on her knees to implore God's mercy and protection, commending her self wholly to his care and providence, and begging of him to be her guardian and protector.

Tho' Deidamia's mind on these surprising attempts on her honour, was variously tossed, till at last she came to a settled resolution prudent-

dently to conceal what had passed, at least till her lord came home, for fear of scandal and disturbance: yet Fronovius might well read in her countenance, whenever he came into her presence, that she had read his letter, and how she resented it; which made him struggle to overcome his passion, but in vain; for like oil thrown on fire, the opposition his lewd desires met with, made him burn the fiercer; so that he resolved to find an opportunity to throw himself at her feet, and discover his passion to her by word of mouth; and whilst he waited for a convenient time and place to do it, he perceived the gardener often to go in and go out very chearful, as highly pleased and contented; and that tho' he only carried her fruits and flowers, yet his frantic passion and jealousy made him believe there was something more in it. Antonio the priest had also observed the like, and had much the same sentiments which emboldened them the more to persist in their wicked and unclean desires, and to continue to persecute the chaste lady with their detested proffers of lawless love, concluding, that if one of so low a rank could be in favour, they in time could not miss of obtaining what they sought; and so blinded with passion and pursuing what they aimed at, (though, as has been said, unknown to each other) they kept a watchful eye over the actions of Deidamia, whose mind was taken up in contemplating the divine perfections of him, who is fairer than the children of men, being every day more confirmed in the truth of her religion,

religion, blessing and praising God, that by so wonderful and unexpected a means had brought her out of darkness and errors, into the marvellous light of his truth, and engaged her heart to embrace and entertain it above her chief joy; partly looking on the trouble she had from Antonio and Fronovius, those brethren in iniquity, as temptations or trials to confirm her the more, by overcoming them in the doctrine she had so lately embraced; in which she firmly resolved to persevere against all temptations whatever.

But whilst these things passed, Fronovius had received no other answer to his letter, but Deidamia's angry and much changed countenance towards him, which he would not take for an absolute repulse, and therefore was resolved to have her positive answer: to obtain which, as Deidamia was one morning leaning upon the window in her chamber, and looking into the garden, he stole softly up stairs, and was got into her chamber just behind her before she heard him, when suddenly turning about, and seeing him in a dejected posture, she was very much surprised, and trembled at the sight, whilst he by many words endeavoured to shew the greatness of his passion; but having somewhat recollected her spirits, she with an angry countenance spake to him thus: *Why, how now, Fronovius? What business have you here, thus to steal into my chamber unawares? This is such an affront, piece of impudence, and rudeness as better becomes a thief than the steward of my household; and*

yet

yet the filthy errand that you come on, is far more criminal than your coming. What have you ever seen of lightness in my carriage that should make you thus audacious, or give you the least hope to succeed in your unlawful and wicked desires? I command you to be gone: and know, that if you persist in your impudence and folly, I will speedily take those methods, that will issue in your deserved shame and confusion.

He would have replied, but she forthwith went out of her chamber, and would not hear him.

This absolute denial and severe reprimand filled Fronovius full of confusion, and almost made him hopeless; but after some recollection he strongly fancied, that the opposition, he met with, proceeded not from the lady's virtue, but from the greater inclination she had to some rival, who enjoyed those favours which he had been pursuing; and he supposed the gardener to be the man, because he had received some particular marks of her favours since the departure of the count Alanson. Being thus persuaded, he was resolved if it were possible, to make a plain discovery: and to this end, he planted himself privately one evening near the back-stairs, that led out of the garden into Deidamia's apartment (for that way he thought his supposed rival must come.) And indeed he had not waited long, before a person came by, and went up those stairs; whom he softly followed to the stairs-foot; the darkness of the night hindered him from

from discerning who the person was that went by him, but he doubted not but it was the gardener, and having listened at the bottom of the stairs, hearing no doot open, nor any key to turn, he imagined the door was left open on purpose, and therefore resolved to go up himself, and surprise them in the very act of their unlawful love: he had no sooner resolved this, but he heard some body come softly down stairs; as soon as the person came to the bottom of the stairs, Fronovius boldly seizes on him, and demands what business he had there at that late time of night? But was extremely surpris'd to meet with, instead of Bernard the gardener, Antonio the priest; whom then Fronovius thought had been with Deidamia. Upon which speaking big words to Antonio, and threatening to kill him for the dishonour he had done his lord in violating of his bed: the poor priest (who was almost dead with fear, and extremely confounded at this accident) trembling told Fronovius, that if he would save his life, he would ingenuously tell him all he knew: which Fronovius promising, Antonio told him the story of his love-addresses, violent passion, and the repulses he met with. That however being jealous of the gardener, and not finding him in his lodging, (for it seems Deidamia had newly appointed him another, unknown to Antonio) he suspected he might be with his lady; where desiring to detect him and bring him to punishment, he had undertaken to come at this unreasonable time: but the doors being fast lock-

ed, and after a long listening, hearing no stir nor whispering, was returning back again to watch a more favourable opportunity, that he might not on slight ground, or uncertainty, lay such a thing to their charge.

Fronovius finding the priest had been repulsed and reproved as well as he, and that his thoughts were the same with his as to the suspected Rival, having hushed his present fears and declared to him tho' somewhat darkly his own affections, &c. They went to Antonio's chamber, where they entered into a combination so hellish and malicious, that it brought many woes and miseries both to the virtuous Deidamia, and the gardener; till, by the mercy of God, to the shame and confusion of the contrivers, they were turned to blessings, to rejoice the injured, and to clear their innocence, after many inexpressible sufferings.

Whilst these wicked men were thus plotting to revenge their repulses, Deidamia was thoughtful of her safety: sometimes she determined to write to Alanson, to remember his promise and hasten his return; but then she concluded, that though his presence might reform these disorders, yet to desert his command upon any private occasion, would derogate from his honour; and then she considered that she could not hide from him the religion she had embraced since his departure, for she could not dissemble if she was taxed with it; and tho' his company was dear to her, yet the enjoyment of the other was more precious and preferable; and that in comparison

son of the love of Christ, all the love in the world was but of little value. At another time she thought of retiring to her parents: But this she fancied would be displeasing to her lord, that in his absence, she should leave the government of his family, which he had trusted to her care at his departure; these things seriously weighed, she resolved to remain at home, thinking time would cure the wild disorders that were in the minds of those two wicked servants.

After this last resolve, she retired to her closet, where she had not been long e'er the gardener came to present her with a paper he had drawn up by her order, of the fundamental points of the protestant religion, in opposition to popery, one being compared with the other, and tried by scripture and the fathers of the primitive times; she accepted this paper very kindly, promising to look it over at her leisure, as a matter she had much desired to be informed in. Whereupon he retired to his labour in the garden, whilst a bribed spy, their enemies had set on the watch, was running information of the gardener's being with his lady; Fronovius was out of the way, but Antonio hastened as fast as he could, and softly opening the spring-lock, impudently entered the chamber, drawing the curtains of her bed, in hopes of finding what he looked for there; but missing his purpose, he stole to the side of her closet, directed thither by her voice; for the pious lady was fallen on her knees,

knees and fervently pouring out her soul to God in these words :

O Most blessed God, who art the father of mercies, and the God of all consolations, I bless and praise thy holy name, that thou hast enlightened the eyes of my understanding with the knowledge of thy blessed truth, and that thou hast delivered me from darkness and ignorance, and these antichristian errors, wherein I have lived since my child-hood, and hast revealed the saving knowledge of thy will unto me, as it is contained in thy blessed word the holy scriptures ; O strengthen my heart in the profession of thy truth, and grant I may never return back again to the popish idolatry and superstition, nor be under the conduct of these blind guides any more, whatever sufferings and trials I may be liable to, or may undergo on that account.

These pious breathings of her soul, Antonio to his great amazement heard, and knew not what to think, whether he should discover himself or retire ; but at last, wickedly supposing the fear she would conceive, lest he should discover what she had uttered against the Romish religion, or that as he concluded, she was turned hugenot (as they call protestants) might induce her to comply with his lust, he presented himself before her, rudely opening her closet door e'er she had time to rise from her knees. This continued impudence of his much
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troubled her spirits; whereupon, rising hastily, she forcibly pulled the door after she had given him a thrust back, and locked herself in. However, it unhappily fell out, that in this disorder, not taking that care, as at another time she would have done, that paper which the gardener had newly brought her, with her hastily shutting the door, dropped out of her coat, and unperceived by her, was shut out of the closet, which Antonio took carefully up, and put in his pocket, telling her (tho' the door was shut against him) he had heard how she apostatised from her religion, and how wickedly she had spoken of the holy Roman catholic church, and what mischiefs he could do her, if he should discover it; yet for the love he bore her, if she would yield to ease his passion, it should be buried in eternal oblivion: but if she refused, he had now got an opportunity to ruin her.

The pious lady (whose fervent devotions this wretch had interrupted) bridled as much as human frailty could do, her passion, commanding him in mild terms to be gone, and not wound her chaste ears with his hated discourse. Against the injury he threatened her, she trusted in God for protection, who is a strong tower for the safety of all those that fly unto him; and she doubted not, when she had an opportunity to make her lord sensible of it, he would, through the favour of almighty God, concur with her, in her opinion.

Antonio, finding himself disappointed in his main expectation, and thoroughly nettled with

this answer, particularly the conclusion of it, went away, threatening and muttering to himself; and in the anti-chamber met Fronovius, who upon later notice was hastening to him, to whom he told all that he had seen and heard. This made them consult to take new measures; and in conclusion, resolved her chastity or life should be sacrificed to their revenge. This was no sooner concluded on, but Antonio remembered the paper he had taken up, and taking it out of his pocket, knew it to be the gardener's hand, and at first supposing it to be a love letter that might discover the intrigue between him and his lady, was highly pleased; but he had scarce read it half over, when he found such weighty arguments against the church of Rome, levelled so directly against her tottering foundation, as not only puzzled his understanding, but made him storm at a strange rate: whereupon Fronovius took it out of his hand, and read the rest, and in the close, these words, viz. *Virtuous lady, these arguments, pro & contra, I submit to your great wisdom being very joyful in having, under God, been a poor instrument in enlightening your understanding, to discern truth from falsehood.*

This left them no longer in doubt, who the party was that (as they termed it) had induced her to apostatize, and become heretic, and for this, consequently to enjoy favours she denied to them; whereupon they vowed a bloody revenge. But fearing that the love Alanson bore her, would not be effaced by the change

of her religion, especially when he should come to understand their criminal passion for her, and practices against her; they resolved to make her parents bear the blame of that stupenduous wickedness, which they themselves designed to be the actors of: for they knew that her parents were extraordinarily bigotted to the Romish church, and so were the likeliest to deal with in this matter: whereupon Antonio, immediately posted to them, and desiring a private conference with the father and mother; after many hypocritical shews of sorrow for the disgrace that would befall the family, he declared how his lady (since his lord had been absent) had been perverted from the catholic religion by a hugenot, a heretic gardener, a fugitive wretch, that had been taken some years ago upon charity. He urged what dishonour it would be to their family, the danger incurred by the king's edicts; and lastly the loss of her soul, if she was not timely recovered and brought to the right fold, from whence she had perversly strayed. Then he began to magnify the pious care and pains he had taken to keep her in the right way, and to prevent her falling into such an unpardonable sin; but that the devil had been too hard for his industry and labours, through God's high sufferance, to bring some great judgment on her, for her haughtiness and contempt, &c.

This being delivered in a tone very moving and passionate, seeming altogether, in pity to Deidamia, made her father sigh, and the lady

Lady burst out in tears, wringing their hands, and bewailing the miseries of their aged years, in this (as they then termed it) worst of misfortunes that could befall them; that the only branch of their family that should convey it to posterity, had made herself a cast-away; for so in their passionate mood they expressed her to be. Antonio was glad to see them thus wrought, and the storm of their first grief spending itself, and being allayed by falling tears, they began to consult more maturely how this misfortune might be reversed; and after many things were debated, Antonio's device of lodging her in a nunnery (where she might be restrained from heretic books, as he said, and the company of any seducers, and also be instructed by virtuous nuns, 'till her lord came home, and determined what might farther be done in it) was approved.

What was to be done with the gardener was the next thing to be consulted, whether to make him away secretly, or to deliver him up to justice: the priest was for the former, but the parents consciences were tender in that, and could not consent to such a wickedness; but Antonio alledged, that the whole business would be made public, if he were delivered up to justice, and their daughter would be brought in as criminal, and perhaps for her obstinacy her lord might lose his honours and preferments at court. This made them consider farther, and at last left it to the wicked priest, or those he should appoint, to do, as he or they pleased. They would have born him company to

Alanson's house to see what their persuasions might do, but he urged it would only be a means to discover the matter; and that it would be best for them to come and moderate things when the count came home, of which he would give them the first notice, since at present what was to be done required secrecy; that in the mean time she should be provided for as became her quality; and that such a place as he mentioned, with time and company, was the best cure to juggle these wild notions out of her head: upon which they only sent her a letter, and resolved not to go themselves. So Antonio returned well satisfied to his wicked companion.

Deidamia, (who was ignorant of this) missing her paper, and not doubting which way it went, taking more care for Bernard the gardener than her self, thought by it he would be discovered; wherefore she sent for him, gave him a handful of gold, and commanded him to shift for himself; telling him what had passed, and the danger he was in. This command he seemed exceeding loath to obey, and with tears in his eyes, protested, that for the sake of his religion, and in her defence against any injury or violence, he was willing to expose his life: but she urged so many things to hasten his departure, that he promised to do it; and so they (with shedding many tears) took a long farewell of each other.

Bernard was preparing to depart, as Antonio returned with his orders; whereupon Pronovius clapped him up in a dungeon; and that

that night hired two russians to carry him to the sea clifts, and throw him thence head-long, and thither they carried him in a sack on a horse, gagged and bound; but finding a vessel thrust into a creek very near the clifts, one of them enquired, and found it belonging to a French plantation in the West-Indies; whereupon they took the method of Joseph's brethren with the Ishmaelites, to make the best purchase of him, rather than destroy him and lose it: so he that came to enquire, demanded of the master, *if he wanted a lusty servant?* He told him, yes; then he returned, and took the gardener out of the sack, ungagged and unbound him, and told him, that though he deserved to die for perverting his lady to heresy, yet they had compassion upon him, and would only send him to do penance for a slave in the West-Indies, and bid him accept of it thankfully, and without muttering, and thereupon they delivered him to the master of the vessel of whom they received twelve crowns. After which they returned, and gave an account they had thrown him with a great stone about his neck from a fifty foot clift into the sea, and for it received the reward promised them. Nor was Bernard unwilling to go with his new master, finding providence had changed the death that was designed him, only into slavery, from whence he might hope in time to be released. But his care was greater for Deidamia than himself, for he had been used to misfortunes, and inured to several hardships. And her grief was no less, that she found

found herself constrained (as she supposed for his safety) so abruptly to part with the man that had been an instrument in the filling her heart so full of heavenly consolations; and had not laid her commands on him to write to her, or otherwise give her secret notice of his abiding place (that she might have had farther converse with him, and been more strengthened by him in the profession of that truth he had initiated her in, and which she was resolved to abide by) till she found means to restore him to his place again.

Whilst she was pensive on these thoughts, Antonio having (as I before told you) gotten a letter from her parents to her, wherein they laid their commands on her till her lord's return, *as she tendered the favour of almighty God, their blessing, and her own honour and safety, to be ruled and guided in all things by her spiritual pastor.* (So being ignorant of his villany, they termed this wicked priest.) *And whatever he persuaded her to for the good of her soul, and bodily preservation, readily to comply with it; to whose care and integrity next to the heavenly protection, they heartily recommended her till her lord and husband came home: this was signed by both of them.* And Antonio having consulted Fronovius about it, they both came boldly to her apartment, when they knew that she was in private, and presented it to her, *charging her to obey it as she tendered her safety: she no sooner looked on it, but she asked them so many questions, that by Antonio's replies, she was*

not insensible, they had traduced her to her parents; and after some just reproaches, told them, *It should not be long, before she would go and plead her own cause, and doubted not so to justify her proceedings to her parents, that the black villany of her base and treacherous accusers should be unable to sully the brightness of her innocence.* This at first startled them; but being fully resolved to proceed in their wicked designs, they plainly told her she was at their disposal, and that they had orders to carry her to a nunnery, where she should be honourably used, but debarred from the destructive principles she had lately imbibed, till her and their lord returned, to take the matter into his own hands, and determine how he pleased to dispose of her.

This insufferable impudence of these lustful wretches, stirred up her zeal to so much holy anger and detestation of what they proposed, that she in a great passion protested to die a thousand deaths, if it were possible, and by the most exquisite torments their hellish malice could invent, rather than be inclosed within the walls of a nunnery, which she was satisfied was no other than a sink of sin, and plausible excuse for lewdness and debauchery. But they without replying, offering to force her from the closet, she opposed her strength against their rudeness, crying out for help to the rest of her servants; but Fronovius, who was the steward and governor of the family, had so ordered the matter, that those who immediately waited upon her, were then out of hearing;

so that without any other interruption, than what her contending gave them, they hurried her into a close chamber in the remotest part of the house, where they locked her in, and went to consult farther, how they should secretly convey her from thence, whilst she (who expected after such treatment, nothing but a violation of her chastity, and would much rather have embraced death, and counting it a favour) was pouring out her soul to God, and imploring his help in this needful time of her trouble, and begging of him to strengthen her faith, till on a sudden, to allay the troubles and afflictions of her mind, such beams of joy and comfort darted into her soul, that she assured her self, *That, the merciful God, whose gracious protection she had been seeking, would work out her deliverance for her in due time.*

These conspirators by this time had come to a result to rid themselves (as they thought) for ever from the fears they were in of their villanous practices being discovered; which was this.

Frenovius counterfeited a letter in Alan-son's hand so very exactly, that if himself had seen it, he might have been puzzled to distinguish it from his own, and having gotten two ruffians ready, one dressed in the habit of an officer, and the other like a servant attending him; Antonio and his companion in wickedness went to her with it, and falling on their knees, with some forced tears, humbly imploring her pardon for the indignities they had offered to her, beseeching her to be their good lady,

lady, notwithstanding their follies, and they would never in the like nature offend, nor do any thing to disoblige her; with many other protestations, and much feigned sorrow for their rudeness and designs upon her chastity, imploring her not to discover it to her lord.

Whilst Deidamia was wondring what that sudden alteration in those, who had lately so rudely treated her, might mean, Fronovius delivered her the letter, in which she read these words:

My dear Deidamia,

THOU I know that the news which these lines will acquaint you with, cannot be acceptable to you, yet I conjure you by our mutual affections, that you suffer not yourself to be disturbed, but hear what I shall tell you, with that patience and serenity of mind which becomes you, as knowing it is your duty in all things that happen to us, to submit to the divine will. Know then, my lovely Deidamia, that in a late encounter with a party of the enemies, I happened to be wounded by a chance-shot, which my surgeons tell me is mortal; and fearing that it may be so, and desiring above all things here below, to have a sight of your dear self, before I depart out of the world, I have sent the bearer Mons. Durrel, one of my captains, to conduct you to me forthwith: who is a person of that worth and honour, that you may trust yourself with him without the trouble of any attendants but what he brings with him.

him, because I would have you come as speedily as may be: which is at present all from him, who is both in life and death,

Your ever faithful husband,

Charlevoix,

July 12.

1693.

D. ALANSON.

At the reading of this she trembled, looked pale, and shed abundance of tears, being in the greatest disorder and confusion imaginable, intreating instantly to see the party that brought it, promising (on their renewing their intreaties) not to discover their wickedness, if by their future demeanour they made an amendment for what had passed; and they thereupon solemnly promising it, led her down into the hall, where the pretended captain and his servant bowed very low to her; and being before-hand instructed, answered all her questions so cunningly, that she verily believed the letter to come from her lord, and that all he said was true, desiring them to refresh themselves, whilst she fitted herself with other apparel, and took some jewels, gold, &c. along with her: which done, and being about four in the evening, the innocent dove committed herself into the talons of these bloody vultures, mounting behind the supposed captain, who had his instructions not to let her see the next morning dawn. Antonio and Fronovius pretended

tended much sorrow at her departure but inwardly rejoiced, that by this stratagem they should get her easily into the trap without noise and disturbance; which had they gone about to do by force, her cries might have brought rescue, and prevented their villanous purposes; the cursed priest indeed would have first had her ravished by himself and his companion, and then murdered at home, but the other considering, that it would be difficult to dispose of the dead body, contrived this way. But I must leave them for some time, hugging themselves in their security, and follow the deceived innocent.

The bloody cut-throats having got the prize by her too much credulity, into their possession, took all the by-ways they could, crossing the country, and holding her in discourse with many things relating to the war, and so spun out the time till the sun was near setting; when coming into a valley between two vast woods, into a place much unfrequented, they rode into one of them, at the turning of a narrow way, where the supposed captain stopped, and the russian that rode single alighted, and suddenly pulled Deidamia from behind him, who at so unexpected a rudeness trembled, and began to suspect the treachery: nor was the other slow in dismounting, when both together they carried her into the wood; upon this, with piteous shrieks and cries, she demanded the cause of such violence; but without replying, the villain who had carried her, drawing his sword, directed it for the fa-

tal thrust, designing instantly to pierce her heart; whilst on her knees she was imploring their pity and compassion, and intreating to know in what she had offended, to make them so void of humanity towards a distressed lady, whom they had so betrayed into that solitary place, being convinced that her lord had given no such command: no, (replied they) that's true nor do we know him; but Antonio and Fronovius have hired us, and we must obey them; besides you are an heretic, and ought not to live.

Deidamia now finding she was betrayed by her wicked servants into the hands of these merciless villains; and seeing nothing but present death before her eyes, she poured out her soul to God in vehement petitions for favour from his hands, and that if he saw fit she should live no longer here, that he would receive her into life eternal, and that rather (if it were required) she might seal her profession of the reformed religion, in which she had found so much heavenly consolation, with her dearest blood, than be prevailed with to recant it. But thou, O Lord, (said she) who deliveredst Daniel from the fury of the lions, and the three children from devouring flames, canst, if thou wilt, in this great extremity, deliver me from these blood-thirsty men, whom I have in no manner injured: but be it as thou pleasest, so that my departing soul, when it leaves this mortal body, may find shelter in the arms of thy mercy. The villains, who all this while had eyed her, and saw her lovely in her tears, troubled not themselves about her

her religion, for their business was to murder her; and therefore the pretended captain said, *lady our time is short, this instant you must die, therefore settle your mind for the fatal stroke.* To this she made no reply, but continuing on her knees, with eyes uplifted to heaven, sighs and tears being the language of her soul, his impious hand was about to give the fatal thrust; but the other caught hold of his arm; and stopt his sword; and after that, they whispered; but she knew not what they said, till their farther attempt revealed it.

They had no sooner done conferring notes, but they violently forced her on her back, and prepared to ravish her first, and then put her to death: her cries upon this were redoubled, and she begged death rather than the loss of her chastity, opening her bosom, and tempting their swords to pierce it. But her beauty in this sorrowful condition was so charming in their lustful eyes, that they were inexorable to her cries and prayers. O had Alanton been but there, with what vengeance at this piteous sight would his sword have been drawn to their destruction, and her rescue! But he being ignorant of the wounds his dear lady was about to receive, heaven interposed for her rescue: for the villains fell at discord, who should first enjoy her; and the contest grew so hot, that they disputed it with their swords, and in the duel the pretended captain (most forward in the mischief) was run through the body, and with a ghastly groan yielded up his wicked soul into the hands of death. The o-

her being sorely wounded, and fainting through loss of blood, gave Deidamia, time to fly farther into the woods wandering so far that night covering every thing with darkness, she thought she might now rest a little to recover breath; and so sat down upon the ground: tho' the dangers she had so lately escaped from wicked men, and those that she now feared from wild beasts, would not a long time suffer her to close her eyes; however she ceased not with earnest prayer and supplication to recommend herself to God, and implore his aid and protection; who by the late wonderful deliverance he had given her, had sufficiently shown her how able he is to save to the utmost, even in the midst of the greatest dangers. The consideration whereof, was a mighty allay to her present sorrows in the midst of that forlorn condition, to which she was reduced; so that a little supported thereby, she at last fell into a sound sleep, having no other pillow than a turf of grass, and covering than the canopy of heaven. The morning being come, Deidamia again returned thanks to God, both for her late deliverance, and her last night's preservation; earnestly begging of him, that as he had graciously begun to deliver her, so that he would in his own good time compleat it, to his own glory and her good; and, that tho' at present her afflictions are not joyous but grievous, yet through God's over-ruling providence, they might afterwards bring forth for her the peaceable fruits of righteousness; humbly desiring

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she might be kept from entertaining hard thoughts of God, or of his truths and ways which she had so lately embraced, notwithstanding any sufferings she had, or might meet withal upon that account. And having thus recommended herself to God, she resolved, if it were possible, to get out of that desolate, pathless, and solitary place: but the more she thought to extricate herself, the more she found herself entangled, and without hopes of getting out. The fruits that at that time of the year grew upon the trees, supplied her with food: and the little purling streams that issued from some springs in the wood, supplied her with drink: so that finding it impossible to get away, she was content to tarry there, till the providence of God should find out some way of deliverance for her; being satisfied in this, that the comforts of conversation and other conveniences that she used to have, were abundantly made up in the communion she enjoyed with God, whose blessed presence (as she has since confessed) did more than recompense for all her outward wants.—In the possession of which happiness we will leave her for a time, and look back to see what became of the surviving ruffian.

His companion (as we have already heard) was killed in their contest, about which should enjoy (or rather ravish) Deidamia first, and he that survived fainted away thro' loss of blood; which (as we have already related), made way for Deidamia's escape: but he recovering in some little time, found means to stop its effu-

sion; and then missing of Deidamia, he made what search he could for her, not so much to satisfy his lust, (which his loss of blood had pretty much allayed) as to take away her life, that in time to come she might not be an evidence of his wickedness; but not finding her after all his search, he buried his companion, and returned to those that had set them to work, telling them, *That Deidamia, when she found she must die, by a surprize, had snatched away his companion's sword and slain him with it by an unlocked for thrust: but that himself had quickly revenged it by her own death, and had buried them both in a deep pit to avoid discovery,* this they believed and gave him what they had promised, being mightily pleased that now they were (as they thought at least) out of danger.

Whilst these things were thus acted, Deidamia's parents being exceedingly troubled, even to that degree, that their sleep departed from them; and those little slumbers that they sometimes got, were interrupted with strange and unaccountable dreams, which was also attended with an unusual melancholy, of which they could give no account. This made them resolve to inquire after Deidamia, of whom they heard nothing, since the permission they gave to Antonio to carry her to a nunnery.

But Fronovius and Antonio had been so cunning to prevent their discovery of the villany, that for a sum of money they engaged a certain abbess of Antonio's acquaintance, to acknowledge (when there should be occasion)

that

that Deidamia had been brought thither, but that she had made her escape from thence, so that she knew not what was become of her, nor could give any account of the reason of it, but only by a note that she had left behind her in her chamber, which note Fronovius (who, as we have already said, had a notable faculty at counterfeiting of hands) had writ in a hand so like Deidamia's that it could not be distinguished. They had also given the abbess a ladder of ropes, by which it was pretended, she had made her escape. Fronovius and Antonio having so well laid their design with the abbess, kept possession of Alanfon's house without fear or controul. And therefore when Deidamia's parents came thither to enquire after their daughter, they received them with much seeming courtesy and kindness, and Fronovius told them, *That tho' it had unhappily fallen out, that their lady had been perverted to heresy since the departure of the count her husband, yet he had taken that care of the family in his lord's absence, which was consistent with his duty; and that as to his lady, the orders they had been pleased to give Antonio to send her to a nunnery had been punctually observed: and he hoped by that means, against the coming home of their lord, she might be again reconciled unto her mother church, out of which there is no salvation.* Tho' this discourse of Fronovius was very plausible, yet the parents of Deidamia were not at all satisfied with it, but desired to see and discourse with her in the nunnery where she was, which

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Fronovius / seemed ready to assent to, and with Antonio offered their service to accompany them thither; telling them, they had given so strict a charge to the abbess, to prevent any heretics from coming to her, that none might be admitted to speak with her, but themselves or by their immediate order.

The parents being for the present satisfied with this answer, lay their that night, big with the hopes they had of seeing their daughter the next day: which being come, they went with Antonio and Fronovius, to the nunnery, but were extremely surpris'd, when they came thither, to hear the abbess say, that the young lady had been too hard for her, and notwithstanding all her care and diligence, had found a way to make her escape but the day before, and then led them into the garden, shewing them the ladder of ropes by which she got over the wall; and then having them into a room that she called her chamber, gave them the note which Fronovius left with her, asking her parents if they knew that hand; they hastily opened it, and thought verily it had been of Deidamia's writing: and then reading it, found it to contain these words:

HAVING been forced to this place against my mind and conscience, let none be troubled that I have found a means to set myself at liberty: and am gone to him, who no doubt will right me of the injury done me by my treacherous servants.

Deidamia.

Het.

The French Convert. 69

Her parents upon reading this letter, and believing it to be true, burst forth into tears for the loss of their daughter, not knowing now in what part of the country to seek for her: the only hopes they had was, that she was gone into Flanders to her husband, to which opinion Fronovius and Antonio both persuaded them, from that expression in the note, *I am gone to him that will right my injuries.* Upon which, giving Fronovius a charge to be a faithful steward in his lord's absence, they returned to their own house, where they writ the following letter to the count, and sent it by an express to Flanders.

To the Count D'Alanfon, Colonel of
the Regiment of Picardy.

Dearest SON,

IT is not without inexpressible grief that we write these lines, which brings you the sad tidings of the greatest affliction that ever be-fel you; and which without the divine aid, you will find it very hard to bear: but I hope heaven will support you under it; it is in brief the loss of *Deidamia*; I do not mean by death, for had heaven ordained it so, that would have been far more eligible; but, alas! she is lost both to herself and all of us; she is since your departure) perverted to heresy, and turned an obstinate hugenot; which whilst we endeavour'd to reclaim her from, by consenting upon the advice of your chaplain, father Antonio, that
Be

She should be put into a nunnery, she is escaped from thence, no one knows whither; the thoughts whereof has filled the hearts of myself and wife with such inexpressible grief and sorrow, as hath rendered us altogether inconsolable, our only remaining hope is, that she may be gone to you; and that if you have not already, you may yet hear of her in a few days; for she left behind her in her chamber, at the nunnery of St. Bridget's (whither Frovovius and Antonio conducted her) the following note.

HAVING been forced to this place against my mind and conscience, let none be troubled that I found a means to set myself at liberty; and am gone to him who no doubt will right me of the injury done me by my treacherous servants.

Deidamia.

It is this note alone that gives us ground to hope that you may see her again; and I pray God it may fall out accordingly. And whenever this lost sheep shall be found again, I doubt not but you will lay her in your bosom, according to the example of our great Shepherd, and by your wonted love and tenderness towards her, endeavour to restore her again to the true fold and church of Christ; to whose holy protection I commit you, and so farewell.

J. MONTAIGN.

The

The count Alanfon was fo transported with grief at the reading of this letter, that for fome time he remained fpeechlefs; his trouble was too great to vent it felf in words; All waters being always the deepeft: but foon after his forrow gave itfelf vent in the moft paffionate and feeling complaints: and then calling for pen and ink, he writ the following letter to her father.

Alanfon, to Sieur Montaign.

S I R,

I Received your letter, the contents whereof has brought that grief and forrow to my heart, that will continue there for ever, unlefs the fight of my deareft Deidamia removes it: her being turned hugenot is not that which gives me much trouble, it rather makes me think there is fomething of good in thofe opinions, or elfe fo much goodnefs and virtue, as that of Deidamia's, could never have embraced them. Had you but let her alone in my houfe I had been happy ftill, but your endeavouring to reclaim her has been the ruin of us both: I am fo transported with grief and anger, that I know not what to write, nor would I write at all, but come away immediately, were it not for the hopes you give from the note found in the chamber of my deareft Deidamia, that ſhe was gone to him that would ſoon right her injuries, and that can be none but myfelf:

myself; might I but recover her again, she should not be mistaken in her thoughts. 'Tis in hopes of her coming, that I am content to stay here a little longer: for 'tis Deidamia alone can make me happy; Farewel.

ALANSON.

The messenger being returned with Alanson's letter, it administred fresh grief to Deidamia's parents. For they thereby found, that by their too easily yielding to Antonio's designs, they had not only lost their daughter, but the affections of their son-in-law. In this state we will now leave them, and make Deidamia a visit in her sorrowful solitude.

Deidamia being in that lonely place, each day removing her habitation, until at last she found a cave to secure herself from the injuries of the weather, and was a quiet resting-place to her in the night season, for by shutting up the mouth of the cave, she covered herself from all danger; which she looked upon, and thanked God for, as a great mercy; and living upon the fruits that grew in the wood, (as I said before) she spent her time wholly in prayer and meditation; and tho' her diet and lodging was extremely changed, yet her health was both continued and increased, and she found that promise made good to her, *As the day is, so shall thy strength be.*

She had now lived almost four months in this solitude, and the winter approaching, began

gan to make the woods uncomfortable : and the cold extremely nipping : so that Deidamia was forced often to walk apace to get her heat. One day as she had walked farther than ordinary, she discovered some kind of an obscure path she had not seen before, and though she knew not whither it would lead her, she was resolved to follow the tract : she travelled so far that day, that it was in vain for her to think of retreating to her beloved cave, where she had lain so many nights ; and therefore making the best shift that she could, she sat down upon the ground, and recommending herself to the almighty's protection, composed herself to rest : the next morning she rose as soon as it was light, and travelling forward, perceived her path to be like that of the just, which the wise man tells us, *shines more and more unto the perfect day* : and she was encouraged to go on, because she fancied she heard the barking of dogs ; and after travelling a little farther, she was well assured it was a real thing, and not a fancy only : and therefore she pursued her journey the more eagerly. The sun had not come to its meridian, when she heard an unusual rustling amongst the bushes, and standing still to know what it might mean, she perceived a grave old man with two dogs following him, come from among the trees. They were both alike surprised at the interview ; for the old man having never seen any human creature in that place before, could not but be amazed to see a woman coming from the midst of the wood ;

and therefore addressing himself to her, he enquired by what misfortune she came thither? Intreating her not to be afraid, for she should receive no harm from him. Deidamia upon this looking earnestly upon him, and perceiving his carriage and demeanour to be what became the gravity of his years, she told him, *She was indeed in a wild place, and knew not the way out again.* To this the old man replied, *If she would go with him to his homely cottage, his wife would conduct her out of the wood.* Deidamia presently accepted of his kindness and went with him. And after they had gone about the space of a mile, they came to his house, where the good old woman (who was somewhat surprised to see her husband bring a stranger along with him) rose up, and received her very courteously, desiring her to sit down, and refresh herself with such homely fare as their cottage afforded. Which she did; and then asking her farther how she came into that place, *Deidamia desired they would ask her no more questions, for the repetition of her sorrow would but renew her grief; only thus much she would let them know, that her being there alive, was the effect of God's providence in delivering her from wicked and blood-thirsty men that sought to take away her life.* Upon which, perceiving her to be full of grief, they asked her no more questions, but finding her very weary, they led her into a homely but clean apartment, to repose her self upon the bed: Deidamia was mighty thoughtful what this aged couple might be; and whether

or no for her apparel's sake, and that gold and those jewels she had about her, she might not fall into as great a danger as that she had formerly escaped, and tho' she was at first glad of their company, she could have wished herself in her beloved cave again. But her fears were quickly over, when by a French bible and other good books, she found in her room, and by the hearty prayers of the good old man at night, she perceived they were hugenots, who had fled into that solitary retirement for the sake of their religion; this made her be much more free with them, blessing God for his providence in bringing her hither, and resolving to continue there, till she could meet with an opportunity to return home into the arms of her dearest Alanson: and the old couple having understood her history more fully, by their pity and commiseration, made her abode with them more easy. And the communion she had with them in the things of another world, weaned her from this in a great measure. So that here she took up her abode, and continued with them, not only that winter but the year following, until she was found out by her beloved Alanson, to whom it is time that we now return.

The count Alanson having tarried at the camp a whole month after the receiving of his father-in-law's letter, in expectation of seeing his dearest Deidamia, began now to be impatient of tarrying any longer; and indeed, during all that time, he was so much changed in his carriage, humours and conversation, that all those

those with whom he used to converse in the camp, took notice of it, he having abandoned himself to an extreme melancholy; therefore desiring of the king to go home, both for the recovery of his health, and for the settling some affairs in his family, he soon obtained it, and soon after (tho' with a heavy heart) arrived there. Where his first business was to enquire after Deidamia, but none of the servants could give any account of her but Fronovius and Antonio, who gave him the same account that had been sent him by his father-in-law: to which he sternly asked them, *how they durst dispose of their lady the mistress, contrary to her will, without his consent or know'ledge?* telling them, *he feared by the note she had written, it was their treachery that was the occasion of her loss; which if he could but be confirmed in, he would take care they should receive a punishment suitable to the greatness of their crimes.* At which Fronovius and Antonio began to tremble, and make the best excuses for themselves they could; alledging the consent of her parents for what they did. But that did not at all satisfy Alanson, who soon discharged them from his service, and resolved to travel in search of Deidamia, tho' he knew not which way to bend his course: But after many a tedious journey, enquiring amongst those who were favourers of the hugenots, yet could hear no tidings of her. So that full of grief and sorrow, he led a retired and melancholy life in his own house, absenting himself from all company, and mourning

mourning like a turtle that had lost his mate, tho' his friends by all means possible endeavoured to comfort him; persuading him to surcease his grief; for that it was probable Deidamia by some misfortune or other was dead; and therefore they advised him to think of a second marriage, as that which would restore his former gaiety, and make him forget Deidamia. But the more they endeavoured to persuade him, the more he was resolved to the contrary; and therefore to avoid their continued importunities, he fixt his resolution once more to travel in quest of her; which accordingly he did, but without success: and therefore he resolved to return again to his own house, and there spend the remainder of his days in solitude.

But as he was returning home, in his way, he met with a vast concourse of people, and demanding the occasion of it, he was told a criminal was going to be broken on the wheel for a murder he had committed, upon which, curiosity led him to see the execution: and getting pretty near, the malefactor cast his eyes upon him, and straight knew him to be Alanfon, the husband of Deidamia; and being smitten with remorse of conscience, he beckoned Alanfon to come near, and humbly begged his pardon for the wrong he had done him. At this Alanfon both started and fell a trembling, fearing it was for her murder the criminal was to die: but coming nearer, the malefactor asked him, *if he had heard any news of his lady?* And then in tears confessed,

himself and another had been hired to murder her, to which end they carried her into a wood, (which he named to him) but by a miraculous providence she escaped out of their hands; that afterwards he had reported to those that set him to work, that he had actually murdered her; for which he received the reward; but which way she escaped, he knew not; and that this was about two years since. The count urged him to tell the names of those that had so hired him; but he said, he had sworn upon the holy sacrament of the altar never to disclose them; and that he feared damnation if he should: only (said he) this I may say, without breaking my oath, they were two persons in whom you have put a great deal of confidence. And then solemnly attested, that what he said was the truth. And soon after was executed.

The dying criminal's confession confirmed Alanfon, that Deidamia had been treacherously carried thither, either from his house, or the nunnery; and he no longer doubted that Fronovins and Antonio were the persons that had hired villains to murder her; and therefore though they were removed from his service some time ago, yet he was resolved to pursue them, in order to bring them to justice: but first he intended to make a fresh search after Deidamia, the criminal having given him an account where she escaped from them; and therefore he thought (if she were still alive) she might be somewhere in the vicinity of that wood: towards that therefore he bended his course, and being arrived in sight thereof, and

see-

seeing how vast a thing it was, he perceived it would be a difficult thing to find her, even though she was there: yet at his entring in he conceived some hopes in his mind, that he should not lose his labour. Whereupon alighting, and giving his horse to his servant, (who had attended him in all his melancholy travels) and charged him to attend there till he came back, he went into the wood alone, and found himself entangled amongst thickets, briars and bushes; yet still he went on, searching every cave and solitary place; often calling out, Deidamia! till darkness coming on, made him think of returning to his man; but he found he was gone too far to retreat back in time, and therefore resolved to go forward and being, no doubt guided by providence, he happened upon that cave where Deidamia had so often bewailed his absence, and mourned her own solitary state; and there he rested his weary and tired body, for that night, resolving to pursue his search the next morning; which being come, just as he was going out of the cave, he perceived something sparkle very bright on the ground, which he stooped and took up; and looking on it in the open light, he found it to be a locket of diamonds which he had formerly given Deidamia; and she unwirtingly had dropt there. The finding of this, filled him with such transports of joy, as looking upon it as an earnest of his good success in finding the owner: thereupon he often repeated her name very loud, but could receive no answer but some broken echoes.

echoes. And therefore going on, he knew not whither; but being directed by the same providence that had before conducted him to the cave, when he had wandered so far, that he was almost hopeless, he was suddenly set upon by two whistling curs, which, upon offering to draw his sword, ran away barking from him; which he pursuing came in a little time to a path where he might discern the footsteps of human creatures, which very much revived his hopes, and encouraged him still to go on; he had not gone far before he discerned smoke to issue from a small cottage; to which, as he approached pretty near, he was again saluted by the furious barking of those dogs whom he had before pursued. This was the cottage where Deidamia resided, who upon the barking of the dogs, looking out to see what was the matter, espied Alanfon coming towards her, and (the idea of his image being continually in her breast) she no sooner saw, but knew him, and running into his arms in an excess of joy, was only able to cry out, *ah! my dear lord, Alanfon!* But excess of joy proves sometimes fatal, and it had like to have done so to Deidamia, for she immediately swooned away in his arms: the dogs still continued their barking, which also caused the good old woman of the cottage to see what the cause was, and was extremely surpris'd to see a genteel stranger there, and Deidamia fainting in his arms; however, she made what haste she could to endeavour her recovery, desiring Alanfon to bring her into the house, which he immediately did,

tell.

telling the good woman that he was Deidamia's husband; which she (being very well acquainted with Deidamia's story) was very glad to hear. It was a considerable time before Deidamia could be brought to herself, which so much afflicted the count, that he was almost ready to faint away himself. But his lady being again recovered, Alanson with a thousand kisses and endearing expressions, assured her of the truth, reality, and constancy of his affections towards her; whilst she on the other hand, seemed to be the most satisfied creature in the world, in that she had once more seen her dearest lord Alanson; desiring him not to be troubled at her fainting away, since it was only occasioned by the excess of that joy she conceived in seeing him again; and that death itself would have been easy to her upon so happy an occasion, and especially dying in his arms.

Whilst in this manner, they were expressing the ardency of their affections to each other, the good man of the house came home; and being told by his wife that Deidamia's husband was there, he was over-joyed; and courteously saluted Alanson, telling him, *he was sure he was a welcome man there to them all, but especially to Deidamia, who had long mourned his absence.* Alanson kindly thanked him, and told him, *he should ever honour him as the refuge and preserver of his dear lady.* And after such civilities on each side passed, the good woman set before him such homely refreshment as she had prepared on the

the table: Alanson eat but little, Deidamia's presence being more to him than all the dainties in the world; yet perceiving with what coarse fare his lady had been there contented, he praised her humility, and wondered at her virtue. Dinner being ended, Alanson was concerned for his servant, whom he had left in the entrance of the wood, and would have gone back to him; but the good old man would by no means let him, telling him he would go himself, because he better knew the way, and could easier find it; and so taking his dogs along with him, he went accordingly: the man having waited at the entrance of the wood, from the time that his master went into it, till the next morning, and hearing nothing of him, leaving his horses in the fields adjoining to the wood, resolved to find him out, and having got a good way, he met the old gentleman, who was coming to him; and enquiring of him for his master, whom he described, he told him he had both seen and came from him, to conduct him where he was, and that he had found his lady; at this, the servant, was very glad, and joyfully went along with him. After the old gentleman was gone for the servant, the count and his lady went into the woods, and there she gave him a particular account of all her sorrows and sufferings since his departing from her. And the reasons of her staying where she was; viz. *The old gentleman not daring to go out of the wood with her, he being a proscribed person; and to go without him was to endanger her own life:*

life: besides, she knew not how Antonio might have ordered matters, having the pretence of heresy to lay to her charge: and that hearing nothing of him all this time, she thought his affections might have been estranged from her. But Alanson assured her of the contrary; telling her, he could not but wonder at the unparalleled villany of Fronovius and Antonio; and that he had turned them out of his service soon after he came home from the camp. After which the old gentleman and Alanson's servant, being (as before related) arrived at the cottage, the evening was far spent, and so they all betook themselves to rest.

The next morning Alanson was preparing for his return home; but before they went, their aged landlord would needs have them stay and dine, and in discourse told him, he was once a tenant of his father's, but by cruel edicts was forced not only to leave that farm, but his paternal inheritance; suffering the spoils and loss of all, for the sake of Christ and a good conscience; and in this solitary retirement, have enjoyed more true peace and satisfaction, than in all the pleasure of his forepast life. The count then asked him his name? which he told him was De la Mont; upon which he presently knew and embraced him, saying, *that tho' himself was of the Roman persuasion, yet he had often pitied his sufferings,* adding *that it was given out he died in prison.* The pious Deidamia from the discourse took an occasion to say, *Ah! my dearest lord, you see what a cruel and merciless religion it*
is

is that you profess, and which through the goodness of God, I have lately departed from. I am not surpris'd (said Alanson) at that which you say, for I was inform'd in Flanders that you had changed your religion. *I wish to God (replied Deidamia) that your self, my dearest lord, was likewise made a partaker of the same happy change.* Upon this Mons. de la Mont put in, and laid down such weighty reasons for the truth of the reformed religion, and against the errors of the church of Rome, that it encouraged Deidamia farther to go on, and shew the viciousness and debauchery of the Romish clergy, their bloody principles and persecuting spirit, so that Alanson was forced, to confess, that what was alledged against their practices was true, but as to their principles (abating that of persecution) he believed they might be mistaken: upon which Deidamia replied, *I am glad, my dear lord, to find you are against persecution; I hope then you will be willing I shall enjoy the liberty of my conscience (the only happiness I have had in this solitary retirement) and that you will never go about to compel me to go to mass, which I will rather chuse to die than do:* to this Alanson replied, that he was no such bigot as to think that those that sincerely worshipp'd God according to the best of their understandings, (as he was confident Deidamia did) might not be accepted of him, though of an opinion different from himself: and as to compel her to go to mass, if by arguments he could not persuade

suade her to it, he solemnly promised he never would use any other means.

And being now ready to depart, Alanfon offered La Mont store of gold for their kindness to his lady while she had been with them, which he absolutely refused, saying, *Her conversation had been so agreeable, that they were the persons who had been obliged.* So that leave being taken, and La Mont praying that God would go along with them, and make their way prosperous, they parted, and coming out of the wood, the servant readily found the horses; and Deidamia getting up behind her lord, they made the best of their way towards Alanfon's house; where they were received with the rejoicing of their acquaintance, and much more of her parents, to whom in a day or two they made a visit, Deidamia being received by them as one risen from the dead. And the story of their daughter's troubles being all related to them, they could not but admire the providence of God, in preserving her and wonder at the monstrous wickedness of Fronovius and Antonio: who upon their hearing of the confession of the dying criminal, had withdrawn themselves from their former residences. And Antonio (the better to escape deserved punishment for his lustful attempts upon Deidamia's chastity) went privately to the bishop of Rheims, and told him that count Alanfon's lady was depraved with heresy, in which she was so much countenanced by her lord, that himself for endeavouring to reclaim her, was turned out of the fa-

mily, and cut off from all interest in it, and therefore came humbly to beg his protection against so powerful an adversary, since what he had done, was out of zeal to promote the catholic religion. The bishop received him into his protection, and writ a sharp letter to the count about it: who having received it, believed it was done by the instigation of Antonio, whom he heard he had entertained, and being troubled that so great a villain should find any countenance from the bishop, he writ back again to know the names of those that had so injuriously informed him against his lady; but the bishop would not gratify him so far in his desires. This made the count return him a second letter, written in a more angry style, declaring, *that if he could not have justice from him, the king himself should be acquainted with it, and by him he would seek redress.* This so nettled the bishop, that he sent examiners to his lady, to interrogate her about her religion, of which the count having some intimation, sent her to her parents, who were extremely troubled at these fresh misfortunes, and mightily scandalised at the villany of Antonio. and the bishop's protecting him from justice, grew thereupon very cold in the profession of the Popish religion, which so furiously persecuted innocence and virtue, and countenanced the greatest wickedness: this the pious Deiramia, wisely improved, and so effectually wrought with them by her warm and zealous discourses, that through the operation of God's holy Spirit assisting

sitting her, they were both brought over to the embracing of the truth.

The bishop's examiners being disappointed, returned back without their errand; upon which the bishop threatened to excommunicate both Alanfon and his family; and was soon after as good as his word. Upon this Alanfon pofts away to the king, who was then at Marly, where he complained of the injury done him by the bishop of Rheims, both in excommunicating him, and protecting a villainous criminal from justice. But it seems the bishop had been before-hand with him, and made his complaint first; for the king received him very coldly, and told him, *the bishop of Rheims was a good man, and he left his business wholly to him.* On which Alanfon returned home much discontented, and found that in his absence fresh search had been made in his house for his lady, though without success. Then he went to the bishop himself, and boldly charged him with entertaining a wicked person, to the prejudice of his honour; telling him who he was, and declared his crimes, desiring he might be brought forth and his lady should appear. But the bishop refusing this, and telling him, *his lady was accused of heresy, and he of countenancing it;* the count in a kind of holy anger, told him, *that religion could not be of God, which encouraged villainy, and sought the destruction of them that were virtuous.* At this the bishop stormed, and told him, *that he should be answered in another nature.* And soon after he had secret

notice from court, that upon a fresh complaint of the bishop's, both he and his lady were proscribed as hugenots; and that notwithstanding his friends intercession and his own former merits, his places were taken away, and his estate ordered to be seized as a terror to others. Alanson finding himself unable to withstand this storm, packed up the richest of his effects, and privately sent them to his wife's father, where she was all this while concealed, and then followed after, himself. Where having declared the great injustice he had met withal, contrary to all religion, honour, honesty and conscience. He then told his relations he was resolved, by God's help to embrace that religion, for which he had been a sufferer before he was a professor; for that religion could not be of God, that did so evidently set up the kingdom of the devil. At which they all rejoiced, and Deidamia more especially; who passionately embracing him, said, *her father and her mother were of the same mind with him*; at which Alanson was the more encouraged. But lest their adversaries should come thither to search for them, they withdrew into a small village and lived obscurely, while Montaign could hear of a convenient vessel to transport them into a country where they might enjoy more liberty.

You have before heard how Bernard the gar. enier was sold to a master of a ship belonging to one of the French plantations, in the West Indies; before we conclude, we will
briefly

show how God's providence watched over him for good also. In his voyage at sea they met with so extraordinary a storm, that all expected present death; but Bernard was very calm, putting up his fervent prayer to almighty God, which was followed by a very great serenity and calmness. This made the master have a respect for him, and oftentimes discoursed with him, his behaviour being always sober, and his discourse savoury. The master having made his voyage sold Bernard for a slave, and having staid there about two months returned again to France, but the discourses and behaviour of Bernard had made so deep an impression in his mind, that he was greatly troubled for having sold him, insomuch that he could not rest, until he had taken a solemn resolution the next voyage he made, to bring him back, and accordingly the next year making another voyage thither, he made it his business to enquire after him, and having found him, asked if he was willing to have his liberty, and return to his own country? Bernard replied, *he never was in love with slavery; but was contented under it whilst God's providence ordered it so; but if he might have his liberty, he would chuse it rather.* Whereupon the master paid the ransom, and brought him back to France; nor was he a loser by it; for a recompence for his kindness, it pleased God to make Bernard an instrument to open his eyes, and bring him to the acknowledgment of the truth. Bernard being got again into his own country, made it his business to

enquire after the welfare of Alanfon's family, and being told of the sufferings that had lately befallen them, he was extremely grieved, tho' at the same time he could not but rejoice that they suffered in fo good a cause. And speaking of them to some of his old christian friends; he was told by one of them, that both the count and his lady lived obscurely and in disguise in the neighbouring village, and that if he had a mind to see them, he would give him a note to the gentleman of the house, upon which he should have admittance to them; or otherwise they would not be spoken with by any one. Bernard gladly accepted of his friend's kindness; and straight went to the house and delivered the gentleman the note, the purport of which was, *That he had known the bearer many years for a faithful friend and brother; and that he had been formerly a servant of the count Alanfon, and had a great desire to see his lady, which he might safely let him do.* Upon reading this note, the gentleman desired him to come in, and sent up one of his servants to acquaint Deidamia there was one below desired to speak with her; upon which Bernard was presently called up; Deidamia was mightily surpris'd to see Bernard, whom she thought she should never have seen more, and very much rejoiced at it; introducing him to her lord, and afterwards to her parents, who all made very much of him and were glad to see him. And having communicated the various providences of God to one another since they had been parted, they all

-blessed

blesſed the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. And afterwards conſulted how to procure a veſſel to convey them out of danger, Bernard gave them an account that the maſter of the veſſel which brought him back to France, was alſo converted; and that now his veſſel lay ready to ſail for Denmark, and he was ſure he would be glad to ſerve them. To this they all agreed; and thereupon Bernard went immediately to the maſter of the ſhip, who readily conſented to carry them, and ordered their goods to be brought preſently, and themſelves to come aboard at midnight; at which time Bernard conducted them to the ſhip, and then went aboard with them in quality of their ſervant; and ſoon after, the wind ſerving, they ſet ſail for Denmark; where being arrived, and tarrying a few days, they hired a Dutch veſſel to carry them to Rotterdam, and from thence they went by boat to Utrecht, which being a pleaſant place, and of a very good air, they reſolved to ſettle there.

Thus, courteous reader, thou haſt had a brief, but true relation of the mercy and goodneſs of God, to that noble family, which is the ſubject of this narrative: and he that reads it throughout ſeriously, will find cauſe to make the ſame obſervations that David did of old, *mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace*. Which the apoſtle St James farther exemplifies in his epiſtle, *You have heard of the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end of the Lord, how he is* very

very pitiful and of tender mercy. Here you have seen the great distress of Deidamia, and here you have seen the goodness of God in her deliverance. Here you have the count Alançon rised of all his estate and possessions; and here you have seen how God has graciously made it up, in giving him that faith which is far more precious than the gold which perisheth.

But I cannot conclude without giving you an account of the judgment of God upon Fronovius and Antonio, that others fear may and give glory to God.

Fronovius after the seizure of Alançon's estate, and his departure into Holland, returned into those parts, but finding himself hated by all men for his villany, he retired into Normandy, where soliciting his landlord's daughter to yield to his lust, and she refusing it, he took an opportunity to ravish her, for which he was hanged without the gates of Roan.

And as for Antonio, tho' he escaped the justice of men, he could not escape the judgment of God; for falling distracted a little time after, he confessed it was God's judgment upon him for the mischief he had wrought against his lord Alançon, and his virtuous lady; saying, *they had taken a way to be saved, but he was sure to be damned*; and so dashing out his own brains against a wall, he died miserably. Both of them verifying the words of the inspired penman, *is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?*

SOME

SOME SERIOUS
CONSIDERATIONS
ABOUT
POPERY:

*And the import of that great controversy
betwixt the Romish and reformed
churches at this day.*

By the author of the Fulfilling of the Scripture.

THO' there seem small grounds of hope to convince such, who, in the holy judgment of God, are given up to that strong delusion of Popery, and cease not to oppose themselves to the clearest discoveries of the truth; yet, this being so sad and deplorable a sight, to see how much of the Christian world thus perish, who will not once open their eyes; and is so clear, that under the greatest of judgments this way must involve them, (if the scripture of God have any weight or credit with such :) yea, since this is so grave and concerning a duty, now in these last times, to bear witness against antichrist, and pursue without ceasing that call, whatever success it shall have, that men would come out of Babylon, and hasten from under approaching wrath and judg-

judgment: I shall lay before the reader, some serious considerations concerning Popery, with an appeal to the conscience of the adversary, yea, to their reason and judgment if they will allow its free exercise herein, about the truth thereof.

CONSID. I.

I. AT what a rate by clear and undeniable consequences, from the Romish doctrine and principles, one can be popish, conform to their way: and what is necessarily imported in being a Roman catholic, as they thus term themselves; which is not more strange and astonishing in itself, than may be clear in these particulars.

1. That it is to deliver up their reason and judgment to the conduct of such, of whom they must see true cause to fear adventuring upon, in the smallest of their outward interests: and where it is so visible, 'tis money for merit, and that all can be sold at this market upon such a price; yea, where the poor only must be left hopeless, who thus have not to expiate their guilt, and purchase a plenary indulgence; as Petrarch of old was enforced to say, that if Judas could come with the price of his master's blood to the Romish market, he might be welcome to buy an absolution; where no sin needs want a dispensation to allow it, or a pardon for its commitment, if their purse can possibly answer thereto.

2. This is to quit that judgment of discerning given them of God, and be shut out of all proper knowledge of the scripture, with their

their own consent (except these of the clergy) so as they must not trust their own eye, but others, in the great interest of their eternal state; and thus take the Romish authority for their bible: yea, such whom they cannot but see, what palpable ignorance in some, and deceit and falshood is in others, of those they thus implicitly credit; and that the concerns of this earth, and their private interest, do for the most of such more sway, than any thing of religion.

3. It is by clearest consequence manifest, that this is a visible betaking of themselves to a covenant of works, and to stand thereby, in the most express opposition to the great intent of the gospel; since, according to their principles, it is merit, yea, their own proper merit, must be the way for their obtaining of heaven; and all they ascribe to Jesus Christ herein is this, only to give life and salvation to their merits, which yet are in themselves, and from their own intrinsic worth, without the imputation of Christ's merit thereto, thus meritorious, as they term it, *ex conigno*: and thus only do they admit, a restoring again by him of a covenant of works on the same terms with the first; *do this and live*.

4. It must be at that rate, one can be this day popish, of the grossest idolatry, and a turning the glory of the invisible God, into the similitude of a corruptible man, Rom. i. 23. with a most express counteracting of that great precept of the moral law, against bowing down and worshipping of any graven image;

mage; they being no less thus guilty of an idolatrous worship, than either the church of Israel of old, or the Pagan world could be charged with; since both had a respect further than the image itself, the one to the true God, and the other to their feigned deities.

5. Whatever liberty this way gives to sin, and to lay the stress of their inward peace on the priest's absolution; yet it is clear; that at that rate on these terms can one be Popish this day, to subject themselves to a yoke and bondage from men, that, without a judicial stroke on their conscience, might seem intolerable: Such as auricular confession to a priest of their most secret sins, and this under the pain of damnation; their penances, with that blind and unlimited obedience therein to their church guides, without access to consult the scripture. as if this way of expiating sin could be a satisfaction before the holy God; such as their whipping of themselves, and going in pilgrimage to some superstitious place; yea thus meritorious because they be grievous to the flesh: but why not rather an offering up of the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul, as those of old unto Molech? which might witness a further degree of doing violence to their own flesh, if men might thus think, by a sacrifice of their deviling, to appease the justice of God.

6. This necessarily also must follow an embracement to popery, and subjecting to that way, to be put beyond a possibility of any inward

ward peace here, or quiet as to their future state in another world, since it is undeniable.

(1.) They must have some merit of their own, and an human satisfaction to confide in; and on that foundation of good works lay the weight of obtaining life; whilst yet, according to their own principles, they see there is no possible being sure, if these shall be found equivalent in value to answer this end.

(2.) That no assurance of salvation is so much as attainable, according to their doctrine.

(3.) How sad a cure, as hath no suitableness therewith to ease a disquiet and awakened conscience, do their principles bring? such as penances, their own satisfaction, the pope's pardon, or absolution of the priest, invocation of saints and images; whence it was in the darkness of popery, most found themselves under that enforcement for so many donations, and to stretch their state to the furthest for soul-masses, since they could find no ground for their souls quiet here.

(4.) And does not this way and doctrine most visibly pursue men, not unto death only, but beyond it, through these tormenting thoughts, and fear of a purgatory to come, and that uncertainty as to the time or term of release; so, as at the best, death must have a terrible and affrighting look?

7. If men would bring this near their thoughts, no less can serve to be a popish profelyte, than a manifest involvement in the blood of all the saints which hath been shed, and serving themselves heir to both the guilt and

judgment of such horrid and unexpressible cruelty exercised by the Romish church on those for so many ages past. who, through grace, did resist unto the death, striving for the truth against antichristianism: for it is clear how such come on the same score by their virtual consent, and justifying the same, with as real accession before the Lord thereunto, as tho' they had actually concurred. Oh what a reckoning will this once be found, to enter into eternity with, before the judgment seat of Christ!

8. And is it now possible for any to be popish, but at that rate of resisting the clearest discoveries of the truth, and an express doing despite to the spirit of grace, a refusing to be cured, and to come to the light, now when antichristianism is by such undeniable evidences revealed to the world, as men cannot be in the dark who this great adversary is, that do not shut their eyes from it? Oh what a revenge do hatred and malice at the truth cause, that can turn men cruel against themselves! Nor is that stroke of judicial blindness more strange and amazing this day on the Jews, when surrounded with so clear discoveries of the truth, than this may now be which is upon the Romish church, that cannot see that desperate state they are in, when such undeniable light is held out from the scriptures thereabout: nay, it must be said, who will not see this!

9. I must here further add, how evident also this is to be popish, and enrolled with such

a party; that it is no less than to stand under that most dreadful peremptory threatening, as is in the whole of the bible denounced against such as in these times of light shall engage with that way, *Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11.* 'If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand; the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the lamb: and the smoke of their torments ascendeth up forever and ever. And they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name.' Oh if men would be so far awakened with the dread of this threatening, as once to come and see but with their own eyes to what party this is applicable, and expressly pointed at by the Spirit of God there! And it is sure they could not then be in the dark how deep it draws, under what pretext soever, for any to be popish. Nor is it strange, that, after such abused light, hell becometh now more hot and more inevitable than before, while so much of the christian world (who own that name and profession) do shut their eyes and ears at so clear and distinct a sound from the scripture, seems to roll over all certainty hereof, to the decision and irrevocable sentence of the great judge.

C O N S I D. II.

II. CAN it be in the dark this day, if this be not upon choice, that the great interest of the reformed church, in contending against popery, is a most express appearance and contending for the truth of christianity, and doctrine of the scripture delivered to us in the old and new testament? And is so discernible, upon these great heads.

(1.) That there is but one mediator betwixt God and sinners, against such direct opposition thereto in the doctrine of the Romish church, that brings in a plurality of mediators, and the worshipping of angels and saints departed for that end.

(2.) In behalf of the reality of Christ's human nature, which, by the doctrine of transubstantiation, is subjected to have a new-created being in their consecrated hostia, at each time, and every where at the pleasure of a wretched man; which is in effect a most express denying of his blessed body to be human and finite.

(3.) It is clear how expressly concerned the protestant church is, in opposition to popery, to contend for the reality of Christ's death and suffering for his elect: and that this time is come and past, no more possibly to be repeated again, wherein he *once appeared in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, Heb. ix. 26. *And by one offering hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified*, Heb. x. 14. against that horrid blasphemy of the mass, which they own as a repeated offering

fering of the blessed body of the Redeemer, by the hands of the priest unto God, as a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; which is so evident a subverting the foundations of christianity, and to make void the infinite value and efficacy of the death and suffering of Christ once offered, and for ever in behalf of his elect, whilst they thus own a continued offering of his body; which, as the apostle shews, *Heb. ix. 25.* that if Christ had offered himself often, he behoved to have suffered often. (4.) And is it not clear, that great interest of truth the reformed church is now pressed to appear upon against popery, is the doctrine of Christ delivered to us in the scripture, as that whereon we must found and resolve our faith, and not the authority of men, which they so expressly oppose and deny; so as it is no less than the christian cause and quarrel, for which all who love the truth are called to contend, and that we should not be bereft of that blessed infallible rule and standard of truth, by those, whose great aim is, to have it denuded of all authority, but what is precarious and dependent on them; no to be so much as intelligible, and to have an articular voice, until they cause it speak, and put what sense thereon they please.

C O N S I D. III.

III. IT may be astonishing (and is surely one of the greatest depths of the judgment of God this day) to see what of the world, with their own consent, is subjected to so visible and notour an *imposture* as popery is, whilst such,

as it would seem not conceivable, how men can exerce reason, and not as in a deep sleep, and have thus hid from their eyes, the obvious deceit and imposture of such a way, where no religion but a compound of human policy, with their own private interest and gain, is wholly intended; about which I shall offer (I hope I may with some confidence say, 'tis for the truth's sake) a short touch hereat in some undeniable instances.

1. None will debate how this way is framed for such an interest, that there may be a grant and allowance from the pope for any sin, and to transgress the expresse laws of the great law-giver; yea this put to sale. Oh what a strange device, that for money men may have a liberty to destroy themselves! whilst on the other hand, nothing is followed with more severe threatenings than an absolute subjecting to their arbitrary commands; so that one may safely disobey the holy God, and this with a warrant; but not the pope and his clergy under the hazard of condemnation.

2. That such a stock and treasure of merits should be in keeping by the Romish church, and under their trust to dispose of, as a thing deposited into their hand by such who had more than enough for themselves, to serve for the use of others: and thus at their disposal to give out thereof to satisfy divine justice for those who have not sufficient merit of their own: this only being necessarily provided, that these who get a share of such a treasure compensate it by somewhat equivalent, and buy it

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ere they have it : but herein could they never resolve the world how to be sure, if these merits were truly more than such whose they were needed themselves, or how they came into their hand, or was intrusted by them to apply ; or if their strength be not long since spent and exhausted by so long continued application in such innumerable indulgences given out of that treasury : oh what a deplorable contrivance is here which I confess should be owned as one of the greatest master pieces of cheatry as ever the world knew ! if it were only to cheat men of their purse ; but this goes further to those great interests of the immortal soul ; and yet so many will not see the visible intent of this trade and merchandise, that it is indeed the merchandise of the souls of men, so expressly foretold by the holy Ghost, *Rev. xviii. 13.*

3. Their taking on them to change the condition of the dead, and insure to their friends the happy estate of their souls upon some large offerings to the church for this. As likewise that respect and veneration they require from men to the reliques of the saints deceased, whereto they ascribe such power both against sin, and for healing the diseases of the body : yea most of these pretended reliques, such as must necessarily, plead some extraordinary miracle to be wrought for their continued preservation, that thus they may with confidence persuade the world their having some bone or scull of the apostles and primitive saints to be still seen, if any have a heart to give a price for it.

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4. That the Romish pope is the true successor of Peter, and thus Christ's vicar, as they term him, upon the earth; which men must needs take upon trust, with an implicit faith from such whose preferment and gain in the world should be otherwise ruined if this be not taken off their hand. whilst yet it is so undeniable at what a strait they are to put a handsome shape on this device, or how the world can know upon any sure ground. (1.) How Peter was at Rome, or that he was settled in a peculiar manner bishop in that see, which neither scripture, nor the most ancient records of the church gives the least shadow of ground for. (2.) How the pope becometh his successor, or upon what warrant, yea, that this should be an article of mens faith, where the scripture is wholly silent. (3.) How that pretended succession to Peter in that particular diocese of Rome, should have a catholic power and headship over the whole church annexed thereto, so as all who succeed in the one, must also in the other. (4.) How a warrantable succession of each particular pope, can be made sure, to the apostle, upon this pretended right, and that he hath lawfully succeeded; since, if this be null, and the election be unlawful, they have then with their own consent no promise of assistance, nor obedience in this case due. (5.) When it is so clear that the power of the keys were no less given to the rest of the apostles than to Peter, as is express, *Matth. xviii. 18, 19.* yea that Peter claimed no such precedence amongst the rest of the apostles,

posibles, as may be seen. Acts xv. Upon what ground can they thus rebound so great a claim as this? Oh what an amazing insatiation are those in, who should take this upon trust, the very recital whereof is so obvious a refutation of itself; and that on such a pretended power and supremacy of Peter, the whole weight and superstructure of the Romish hierarchy must lean: yea, which is of a higher concern, that on this by undeniable consequence, must be rolled over a weight, no less than the eternal interest and perishing of many millions of souls, who upon this plenary power and infallibility of the pope, thus founded upon such a ground, do adventure with such acquittance and absolution as their security into another world.

5. That notable device of purgatory may be a convincing witness to the horrid imposture of popery, than which nothing could have been more subservient to that great design of a lucrative interest, and to keep the people under a continued awe and terror; yea, what improvement for so many ages they have made of this for their own private gain, that it may be seen, the Romish church should lose one of the greatest revenues it hath, if purgatory were not kept up among them, and is beyond reckoning by themselves what continued income this hath had, *Et quantum hæc fabula profuit Romanae ecclesiae*. But oh! such as will thus adventure hereon, may have saddest cause to fear, that this purgatory, on their immediate parting with time, be found a
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real hell, whence no release, or possibility thereof can be, tho' all the treasures of the earth could be given for the same; and then shall know this sad verification of this truth, 2 Thess ii: 11, 12. which so expressly points at antichristian popery; *For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, to believe a lie, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; that they all may be damned, who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

6. What strange account do their legends give of their pretended miracles, as the most effectual way to gain credit to these doctrines, which they see can have no possible founding on the scripture: such as that we may judge those, who are but in the least knowing amongst them, wonder, how credit could be expected from any thereto, such as they tell us of St Francis, how he was greater than John the baptist, and better than all the apostles, who in vision received the wounds of Christ, suffered the same griefs, in whom all virtues of the saints, as well under the old, as under the new testament, are put *unitive & conjunctive*, and after, most blasphemously puts him in the same room with our most blessed Lord, by reason of a schedule which they say Leo the friar saw descend from heaven, and fell on the head of Francis, whereon was writ, 'This man is the grace of God, and example of perfection,' &c. This book, wherein these, yea, where more horrid blasphemies are written, called *Liber conformitatum, impressis Benedictae*,

niae, fol. 3, and 150. is called by them their golden book, with this exprefs clause underneath by a general consent of the chapter of that order. We have searched this book, and found nothing worthy of correction. Such an instance also is he whom they call St. Dominic, of whom they shew that Christ raised three only from the dead, but St. Dominic three in one city, that he had the angels at his service, (but it may be easy to judge what angels they were) how the elements did obey him, and the devils trembled at him; how he had a star in his forehead, when he was baptized, and restored forty strangers to life that were overwhelmed in a ship, and long under the water, with much more of this kind; published to the world by Anthony an archbishop of his order. Anthon. Arch. pag. 3. 23. But with these famous instances may be fitly joined two nuns, no less known and public, who, if they had lived in one time, and their order could have allowed it, might have been suitably matched with other: the one is Magdalena de cruce, abbess of a monastery of Franciscan nuns, who by the power of the devil appeared to mariners in a storm at sea, when invoke, and the storm calmed, was sometimes lift up into the air, and the sacrament went up visibly out of the priest's hand that said mass, thro' the air before all that looked on, unto her, was of such repute, that, not only many ladies in Spain, but the Queen also, when she was near to be brought to bed, sent the mantles wherein the child was to be wrapped

ped, for her to bless : yet, at length upon clearest discovery, and her own confession, found to be a witch, in express compact with the devil since she was nine years old, so as the Spanish inquisitors could not get shifted some form of sentence against her, *Anno* 1540. A passage, the truth whereof the Romish church will not offer to disown, the relation being so public and known by their own writers : and indeed, she was well suited to be an abbess of St. Francis order. The instance is that relation set forth by one Stephen de Lusignan, dedicated to the French queen, of the great miracles, in the year 1586. which happened to the prioress de laannonciado of Lisbon in Portugal, approved by the greatest churchmen there, whose names are set down, how usually Christ appeared to her, and talked with her, and had the impress of his five wounds put upon her, with many such strange things, so as severals were incited through the fame of her, to become nuns ; yet at last was, by a marvellous providence from the Lord, discovered, and all to be an imposture, confessing the same herself, with the whole manner of it ; so as the evidence thereof did enforce the Archbishop of Lisbon, with the inquisition to make some shew of condemning her, as is printed at Seville 1589. But the discovery came too soon for their interest, after the relation of her miracles had gone abroad. These instances I only here touch, of which so many else are known to the world, that it may be seen, on what signs and lying wonders, this party
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leans for the support of their doctrine, which may not abide the light of the scripture. But oh, it may be sad and amazing in this day, when the truth is so clearly shewed forth, how so much the world seems to have lost all light and impressions thereof; yea, turned at that rate atheistical, to be thus imposed upon, for subjecting to that way, where the bait cannot be more discernible than the hook, and where men must quit both religion and reason at once, in getting such a life as this of a Roman-catholic.

CONSID. IV.

IV. WHILST this strange sight we have this day before us of the Romish state and hierarchy, with that peculiar frame and mould it is cast in, so different from other kingdoms of the world, of such numerous orders and degrees, resolving in one monarch and head, the man of sin, after whom the world so long hath wondered. Let us but seriously also consider what true account antiquity, on which they so much lean, gives of this way.

1. How clear and notour, even to admiration, is that discovery so many ages past of this adversary; his shape, the way and manner of his appearance, and so expressly foretold by the holy Ghost, as we now see with our eyes in the event, when upon no principles of reason, or the least of visible appearances, such future emergencies could ever been foreseen, or have entered into mens thoughts, that it may be demonstrably evident to all, this only
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could have been revealed by him, to whom all his works are known from the beginning.

2. As the scripture shews that early rise this mystery of iniquity had, and its beginning to work with the first dawnings of christianity, tho' then more undiscernibly, and under ground: this we may know also, under whose hand this monstrous birth was most ripened, and brought forth to a more public view of the world, to wit, that horrid and vile wretch Phocas, who then usurped the empire, and conspired against his master Mauritius; and as all histories of that time shew, what a plague and judgment from the Lord he was to the world, so as 'tis related of a holy man, who then lived, after much wrestlings in prayer with God with some serious enquiry, why such a vile wretch had been set up over the empire, got in a strange manner this answer, *Quia non inveni pejorem*. Yet this cruel and brutish man Phocas, as the popish writers themselves are forced to confess, was he for whom Gregory the great by his legate, doth so congratulate his advancement, as he summons the angels and all the saints in heaven to rejoice therein. After whose death the succeeding pope Boniface did so far insinuate on this emperor, as to divide him from the Greek patriarch, and obtained the granting of that charter, upon which their pretended right stands, to be universal head and bishop of the christian church: a very obvious suitableness being here, for one bloody usurper as this was, who rose upon the assassination of that good emperor

peror and his children, to make thus way for another; nor a fitter mean could have been found to help the man of sin to his throne than this Phocas, for which see *Baron. 81. an. 603. Art. 3.*

3 It should be remarkable, that concurrence of things was then for the more full discovery of this adversary, and of his being revealed to be that man of sin, shewed by the holy Ghost. *2 Thess ii. 3.* When their own greatest writers are enforced to tell, since this could not possibly be hid, how from the eight century, and several ages after, such as exercised the papal power, were, for the most part so many prodigies of wickedness in their time, that these histories seem to want words to express the horror and abomination of such as were popes, for which let any but read Platina himself, *lib. 5.* upon Benedict the 4. and many others of their lives, where he shews, how they were become such, as, laying aside divine worship, like cruel tyrants, did exercise their malice in the world; but that some of them lived not long, God taking them away as so many monsters of men: but more fully doth cardinal Benno speak to this; yea, Baronius also in his annals, tom. 10. how it was then known their ordinary use of magic, consulting with the devil, and giving themselves over to these horrid villanies, as no heathen records almost give such an account: and, which are Baronius his own words, tho' one of the greatest friends to the popish interest, That such was the face of the Romish church, as sees were

changed, bishopricks and church-offices given at the pleasure of the vilest strumpets that then bare rule at Rome. Now this is that true antiquity they have to boast of to the world, and of those popes, whose infallibility in all matters of faith they would persuade men to rely on.

4. How undeniable is it from those times, when the Romish hierarchy once began to ripen to its height what sorest plagues did thus follow and break in on the christian world, yea, what an inlet of grossest ignorance was therewith, not only of divine things, but of all human literature, and morality, as from the concurrence of histories then is clear; that with the several steps of the advance of the popish grandeur and power, the world did gradually turn worse, yea, and in a strange manner became barbarous, rude and savage, so as both Baronius and others of their writers (who they know intended no reflection upon their way, further than necessity enforced them to speak) shew such was the face of those times, as it was a matter of suspicion to know the Greek language, but to have any knowledge of the Hebrew, was no less than heresy; yea calleth them *infortunatissima & luctuosissima Romanae ecclesiae tempora*, and that these and following ages were such, wherein all things, both human and divine, were in visible confusion.

5. And is it not notour to all, who consult the church records, what a flood, not only in dissoluteness of practice, but atheism in principles, did remarkably then break forth on the christian

christian world, with that advance of the Romish interest towards its height; so as those, who were serious in the matters of truth, were almost brought to a questioning of the whole of the gospel, and any sound sounding of their faith in the matters of God, whilst religion seemed to be almost lost in fabulous traditions, and human inventions? Thus Frederic the third king of Sicily, a religious prince; in such dark times, was staggered about the christian faith, and made to question if the gospel was not some human device, as is published at length in his conference with *Arnoldus de Villa nova*, a learned man, upon these grounds; 1. That the whole clergy great and small conformed their lives no wise to the scripture, had no regard to the souls of the people, and discharged sacred offices, for a form only, or else in scorn and mockery, which then was so notour, as it could not be hid. 2. That those of the more severe order of monks, did obviously evidence hypocrisy, impiety, wantonness, rapine, yea incredulity about the gospel itself. 3. That in a doctrine so weighty, and of such consequence, as the christian faith, the Romish church seemed so little concerned, were intangled in worldly affairs, and no course set on foot for propagation of the gospel. To satisfy whom Arnoldus shewed how expressly such defection, and these corruptions were foretold under the New Testament, as that conference published by himself shews. And besides, it is known what advantage the visible grossness of popery

gave to mahometanism, and for many's falling off from the visible profession of christianity; which caused Averroes the philosopher to cry out, *Cum Christiani Deum suum manducent, sit anima mea cum philosophis*. Yea enforced such, who gave any serious look to the scripture, to say, that either the scripture was not the word of God, or such as professed the same, were not christians. And when thus atheism may be seen to follow popery as its native effect, and mutually concur together; Oh! what might be feared from such an obvious conjunction of both in this time, if the truth and faithfulness of God were not his church's security.

C O N S I D. V.

V. SHOULD it not seem strange, and such, as no reason can truly answer, why in these times kings and great men of the earth have given their power to support the Romish interest, when this so visibly is destructive to the just right, and interest of all magistrates; but that we see it is of God, in giving them so far up in his secret judgment, until the scripture be fulfilled, as is clear, *Rev. xvii. 17.* for 'tis sure, otherwise these things cannot be hid from their eyes.

1. That as the grandeur of the Romish church grew up, how the kings of the earth by giving their power thereto, lost their own, and by their concurrence in this design were no less evidently depressed than the other raised; so as all, who look in on the history of such times, may clearly see the several steps
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of the pope's advance, in coming to his height, and of the empire's declining and fall, both in the eastern and western parts, most visibly meet in one and the same history: yea thus how quickly magistracy, and the power thereof was turned to an image and shadow, that it could not further live and act, but as it was enlivened with the Romish breath; yea, how quickly, in a few ages after Phocas, the greatest of the western emperors were forced to bow at the pope's feet; so as Henry the IV. was put to stand three days in the cold winter bare-footed at the pope's gates, ere he could be reconciled, upon some pretended quarrel he had against him; yea, the popish writers account it their honour to tell the world how Frederic Barbarossa, the first emperor of that name, was made to lay his neck under pope Alexander's feet, until he trampled thereon, blasphemously making use of that scripture, *Psal. xci.* that thus he would tread upon the lion and the dragon, before he could obtain his son's liberty then in prison in Venice, and at the pope's disposing. And here we may have a conspicuous commentary on that scripture, *2 Theff. ii. 3.* that this let, which was to be taken out of the way of the man of sin's being revealed as is there foretold was not the heathen empire of Rome only, but the Roman empire in its integrity and strength, even after it was christian.

2. It is undeniable from the Romish doctrine and principles, that power the pope and rulers of their church owns to dethrone kings, and

and transfer their kingdoms to others, and by their interdiction to loose subjects from any tye or allegiance to their prince, to bind or loose mens consciences, as they find their own interest stand; and, by that plenitude of their church's power, to exempt ecclesiastic persons from the laws of magistrates, so as they may not be judged by these, for the most horrid and notorious crimes, which the civil power ought to punish; whilst their church immunities are a city of refuge for retreat.

3. And as the Romish religion strikes at the very root of piety and godliness, when by the pope's power, yea of ordinary priests, it can dispense with the most horrid acts of wickedness, murder, adultery, rapes, incest, sodomy, and hath their rates stated at what price they can purchase a full absolution for the same; so doth it thus no less visibly strike at the greatest security of government, and that which foundeth the strongest obligations to all civil and moral duties, which is to have the awe and regard of religion kept up in a nation.

4. It is clear also, how the Romish doctrine subverts truth and righteousness amongst men, which is the greatest security of all personal interests, when it avowedly warrants equivocation, both in oaths and words, and in such doubtful terms to swear, as may be directly contrair to the intention of the judge requiring the same; so as an oath in judgment cannot be the end of controversy; yea, by their doctrine expressly teaches also, that a man is not bound to repent presently for the most

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hainous sins, but is only necessary in the last extreme of life.

5. Are not the principles of the Romish religion, such as are visibly destructive even to human society, in so professed owning, under a pretended zeal against heresy, (for such is the doctrine of Christ unto them) those prodigies of cruelty which we should think human nature, tho' corrupt, could not but tremble at, without being transformed into the very image of the devil? Such as the French and Irish massacres, the Netherland persecution, under the duke of Alva; the Spanish inquisition, and those bloody years under queen Mary's reign in England, do before all the world witness; yea, it is obvious, how no cruelty, even of the heathens in the first times of the church, can almost be found to parallel with the popish cruelty, where they can have a door opened for this. Oh! that it should be so little seen and laid to heart at this day, how the common interest and concern of all princes and magistrates, even upon their own civil rights, is to contend against this greatest adversary, that ever Jesus Christ had upon the earth, and, if now be not believed, saddest experience may yet make this clear, that in those parts, where the truth hath been received and embraced, and by the good hand of the Lord rescued from the yoke and dominion of antichrist, that 'tis sure the security of the church and commonwealth is there necessarily conjoined so, that, if the protestant interest should wear out, and the truth decline,

cline, the land cannot possibly be safe, where once this had been received.

The Romish interest now seems to gain ground, yea a strange and unusual conjunction to promote that way: but 'tis well, we know a more blessed and infallible security, than outward appearances to rest upon; and with that assurance, as we can be persuaded of an eternal salvation by Jesus Christ. It is sure also, 1. That the victory and decision of this war shall be on the Lamb's side, and those that are with him must overcome, when the living God hath past his word thereupon, to his church; and tho' we may set no bounds, as to any particular time, we have solid ground to believe that a more remarkable stroke above all that hath been hitherto, hastneth upon the kingdom of antichrist. 2. That whosoever withdraw, and think it their interest now to keep a distance in any adventuring for the truth, yet light and deliverance shall arise to the church from another airth; but this shall not be their escape and outgate: yea tho' it seem a strange contradiction to sense and reason, it is to be the matter of our faith, that assuredly now the rise and advance of the reformed church is on foot, and her sharpest conflicts and wrestlings must tend thereunto. 3. Tho' the spirit of intercession and prayer may be too discernibly found under a sad restraint, as to what hath been in former times in the church; yet tis sure, that many prayers and groans once put up by an innumerable company who now are in heaven, in behalf

half of the church, and for that solemn day of Babylon's fall, yet waits and still cries before the throne; such prayers, wherein they had greatest access and liberty by the help of the Spirit, for pouring out their souls thus before the Lord. 4. 'Tis sure we are to believe, that instruments shall be yet raised, and called for that end, with a marvellous appearance of God upon them, to execute the judgment written against this adversary; and O what a blessed, and honourable service shall it be! 5. Should this not otherwise be made out, but through a sea of blood, and wounding the heads over many countries, yea in a way (as we have clearest ground to judge) which human reason could never reach. It is sure, this cannot be wanting, and when the God of truth hath said, such an enemy shall be brought down, his counsel must stand, tho' all the kingdoms of the earth stood in the way thereof; oh! at what a rate do these now run themselves in the way of his wrath and vengeance, and to be partakers of the same plagues with antichrist, who yet will not cease, for giving their power to support that accursed and falling interest.

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